



## **Steps to Participate in Education Abroad**

### **Step 1 - Properly Plan the Education Abroad Process**

Proper and timely planning is essential to facilitate the education abroad process. Start the process early – the earlier the better. If possible, start the planning phase at least one year before your target education abroad date (for external programs). Planning for participation in a PVAMU faculty-led program generally does not require as much lead time, but adequate planning is still necessary. If possible, allow at least six months for PVAMU faculty-led programs.

Determine your eligibility to participate in education abroad. Consult the Education Abroad web page of PVAMU International Affairs to see if you meet the criteria.

Schedule an appointment and meet with International Affairs staff in the planning phase to discuss your interests and to ask any questions that you may have about eligibility. Also, schedule an appointment and meet with your academic advisor to determine how education abroad can fit with your academic and professional goals.

Continue to meet with International Affairs staff and your academic advisor as needed throughout the process.

### **Step 2 - Determine Your Goals and Priorities**

In deciding to participate in education abroad, there are several factors to consider. Some of the questions to ask yourself in determining your goals and priorities are as follows:

- Why do you want to participate in education abroad and what do you hope to accomplish?
- What do you want to study?
- How does education abroad fit into your academic and professional goals?
- What type of education abroad program are you interested in?
- Where do you want to go? What countries interest you and why?
- When do you want to go (i.e., the academic term) and how long do you want to stay?
- How will you fund your education abroad experience?
- What type of living accommodations do you want when you go abroad?
- Do you want to participate in education abroad on your own or with other PVAMU students?

### **Step 3 - Explore Your Options**

Based on the answers to the questions in Step 2 and any other important considerations, research various programs and countries to determine which programs are the best choices for you.

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If you have an interest in a PVAMU faculty-led program, you may want to talk with International Affairs staff, the professor(s) of the program(s), and your fellow students who have participated in a particular program to learn more about the program. Information regarding the PVAMU faculty-led education abroad programs is usually advertised on Campus Announcements and/or the PVAMU Education Abroad web page.

If you have an interest in an external program, there are several sources for you to consider. There are a variety of search engines for you to choose from including, but not limited to, those at: [www.diversityabroad.com](http://www.diversityabroad.com), [www.studyabroad101.com](http://www.studyabroad101.com), [www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com), and [www.iiepassport.org](http://www.iiepassport.org). Some of the websites contain general education abroad information as well as specific program information.

Another source for external programs is the Texas A&M University System (TAMUS) member universities such as Texas A&M University (College Station). Some of the TAMUS member universities have education abroad programs in which PVAMU students can participate. Please review the various TAMUS member university education abroad websites.

Also, the websites of various education abroad program providers are another source of external programs. The website links for the education abroad providers and organizations that participated in previous PVAMU Education Abroad Fairs can be found on the Education Abroad web page of PVAMU International Affairs.

Be sure to attend the PVAMU Education Abroad Fair (held annually during the fall semester) to find out about external and PVAMU faculty-led education abroad programs. You will have the opportunity to talk directly with representatives from various education abroad program providers, scholarship program providers, PVAMU faculty-led education abroad programs, and other organizational representatives.

Also, review the entry and exit requirements of the countries that you would travel to and travel through for the education abroad programs you are interested in. The entry and exit requirements can be found at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) and the specific country's embassy website.

### **Step 4 - Select an Education Abroad Program and Obtain Approval and Your Passport**

#### **External Programs**

Select an external education abroad program. Ensure that you meet the external education abroad program eligibility requirements of the program that you select and the PVAMU education abroad eligibility criteria. Complete the Pre-Approved Transfer Credit Form and obtain signatures from your academic advisor, department head, and dean. In case some of the courses that you select are cancelled, seek approval on more courses than you intend to enroll in. Identify the extra courses as alternate courses. Provide course information and syllabi from the education abroad program provider or host university to the PVAMU academic officials to assist in evaluating the courses and determining if they are approved for transfer credit.

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Complete and submit the **PVAMU Education Abroad Application** by the deadline along with the Pre-Approved Transfer Credit Form to International Affairs. Ensure that you allow at least 30 days for the PVAMU Education Abroad Application approval process as education abroad eligibility criteria must be checked by various departments.

After obtaining approval from International Affairs to participate in education abroad, complete and submit the external program application directly to the external program in which you are applying. Also provide a copy of the external application to International Affairs. It is a good practice to apply well ahead of the deadline as some programs may become full prior to the official deadline.

### **PVAMU Faculty-Led Programs**

Select a PVAMU faculty-led program. Ensure that you meet the education abroad program eligibility requirements of the program you select and the PVAMU education abroad eligibility criteria. Consult with your advisor to determine if the program/course is suitable for your degree plan. Complete and submit the **PVAMU Education Abroad Application** by the deadline to International Affairs. Ensure that you allow at least 30 days for the PVAMU Education Abroad Application approval process as education abroad eligibility criteria must be checked by various departments. Provide any program-specific paperwork to the PVAMU faculty-leader that is required. Obtain faculty leader approval if necessary.

If you have questions after you receive a determination on your education abroad application from International Affairs, please contact International Affairs. If you have questions about a determination received from a PVAMU faculty leader for a PVAMU faculty-led program, please contact the PVAMU faculty leader.

### **Obtain Your Passport**

If you do not have a passport book already, do not delay in applying. Apply for a passport at least four months in advance. If a visa is required, you may need to apply for a passport earlier than four months in advance. If you have a passport, ensure that it is valid for the period you are to be abroad and for at least six months after your anticipated return date to the United States. Additionally, some countries require at least two blank visa pages in your passport. If you travel internationally on a frequent basis, you may need to obtain additional pages in your passport. Passport information for United States citizens can be found at the following link: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/apply.html>.

### **Step 5 - Apply for Financial Aid (if desired and if applicable)**

Complete an education abroad budget. See the Education Abroad Budget Worksheet on the Education Abroad web page of PVAMU International Affairs. Schedule an appointment and meet with Financial Aid staff. During the meeting, provide the budget and inquire about options available for financial assistance. *(You may choose to complete a budget worksheet and meet with Financial Aid when you are exploring options in Step 3 so that you are aware of the estimated total costs and potential financial aid available before you select a program.)*

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Apply for financial assistance if applicable. Consider external and internal sources of financial aid for the education abroad program that you have chosen. Apply for the PVAMU Panthers Abroad Scholarship if applicable. Apply early for financial aid. Please note that in some instances, you will need to apply for financial aid at the time that you apply for an education abroad program. Additionally, for the PVAMU faculty-led programs, you may need to apply for the Panthers Abroad Scholarship award before acceptance in the PVAMU faculty-led program (depending on when the program occurs, the Panthers Abroad Scholarship application period, and other circumstances). Please pay close attention to Campus Announcements for the Panthers Abroad Scholarship application posting.

### Step 6 - Complete Post-Acceptance Paperwork and Requirements

Provide a copy of the following to International Affairs: 1) your external education abroad program acceptance notification or 2) your PVAMU faculty-led program acceptance notification if provided by the PVAMU faculty leader.

Complete the post-acceptance requirements for external programs including registration.

If you will participate in education abroad through a PVAMU faculty-led program, register for the PVAMU course.

Pay balances associated with your education abroad program by the deadlines provided. Clear holds and outstanding balances.

### Step 7 - Become Familiar With and Adhere to the Entry/Exit Requirements

Rereview the entry and exit requirements of the countries that you will be traveling to and traveling through for your education abroad program. There are many variables pertaining to entry and exit requirements (depending on the countries that you are traveling to or through and your country of citizenship).

#### Obtain Your Travel Documents

After you have your passport, if a visa is required, you will need to apply for your visa. Typically, you will apply for the visa after you have been accepted in an education abroad program. Obtain any other travel documents required.

#### Obtain a Medical Consultation

Review the travelers' health recommendations and requirements at [wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel). Make an appointment with your doctor to obtain the immunizations and medications that you need. You should see your doctor at least 6 weeks before you travel.

Also, check the country's requirements to determine which medications are allowed in the country along with the requirements for prescriptions and obtaining refills. Additionally, you may choose to travel abroad with a prescription for your eyeglasses or contacts in case you need to replace them while abroad.

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### Step 8 - Make the Necessary Arrangements

Arrange for your airline ticket, housing, in-country transportation, etc. if arrangements are not included in program. Also, ensure that your health insurance provides coverage abroad.

Enroll in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program through the U.S. Department of State at <https://step.state.gov/step/> (applicable to U.S. citizens).

Make arrangements for your personal business as necessary before you leave.

Depending on the exchange rate, consider whether you want to convert some of your money before you go abroad.

If you are participating in a semester or academic year education abroad program, determine in advance how you will enroll in classes for the semester of your return, register for housing, make the necessary payments, etc. while you are abroad.

Check the airline rules on baggage allowance/size and security checkpoint regulations. Pack the appropriate attire based on the culture, climate, season, anticipated activities, etc. Check-in at the airport no later than the time required by the airline.

### Step 9 - Complete Pre-Departure Paperwork and Requirements

Complete pre-departure paperwork including a release, indemnity agreement, and emergency notification. Purchase and enroll in Cultural Insurance Services International insurance (supplemental insurance) through PVAMU.

Complete PVAMU requisite training and attend a mandatory PVAMU pre-departure orientation. Read all documents that are provided. Prepare for your education abroad experience by reading about the culture, history, politics, and economy of your education abroad country.

Provide a copy of your itinerary and flight information along with a color copy of your passport photo page to International Affairs. (The faculty leader for the PVAMU faculty-led program will collect the passport photo page color copy from you and will provide the itinerary and flight information to International Affairs if group travel arrangements are made.)

### Step 10 - Complete Post-Travel Requirements and Fulfill Education Abroad Purpose

For external programs, notify International Affairs staff when you arrive at the education abroad program site and keep in contact with International Affairs throughout your term abroad. Notify the consulate's office or embassy of your visit (not applicable for short-term programs).



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Fulfill your education abroad purpose. Do not change courses without prior approval. Adhere to the enrollment requirements of PVAMU, the education abroad program, and host university. Provide a copy of your Education Abroad Program enrollment to International Affairs (not applicable for PVAMU faculty-led programs).

Arrange for your return in a timely manner (e.g., airline tickets, etc.).

Before returning from your education abroad program, please arrange to have an official transcript from the education abroad program or host university submitted to the PVAMU Office of the Registrar (applicable for external programs).

Complete and submit the post-education abroad report to the PVAMU Office of International Affairs by the deadline indicated.

**Note:**

*Depending on the program that you choose and your individual circumstances, the steps may vary. In all cases, a PVAMU Education Abroad Application must be submitted and approved prior to participating in education abroad.*

*Travel to a country with a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning will generally not be approved.*