Study Abroad Guidelines

International Business in the College of Business and Economics

Study abroad is an important element for students pursuing international business in CBE. IBUS Students are encouraged to make a period of study abroad part of their overall program at CBE. An approved program satisfies the 'international experience requirement' for graduation in the IBUS program.

It is important to first investigate the options available by visiting the International Programs and Exchanges (IPE) office located in College Hall 104. You can speak with a Peer Advisor for IPE, who can assist you with exploring the many options for study abroad. The office also has a list of approved study abroad programs that offer business courses. This is available on the web at http://www.cbe.wwu.edu/mgmt/curriculumIB.asp#Study%20Abroad

One of the most intensive and also least expensive ways to study abroad is to go on a Direct Exchange at one of Western’s international partner universities. Programs involve an exchange of students with WWU. You are a ‘normal’ student at that university, with all the experiences and challenges that involves. It has the extra benefit that you only pay only the Western tuition and fees. The IPE office will have a current list of Direct Exchanges, so be sure to ask when you make your initial inquiry. Dan Lindeman, one of the staff members, will work with you to help you determine if this is the right kind of exchange for you. There are also a wide range of approved, contracted programs available with higher cost and more assistance, as well as some programs led by Western Washington faculty.

The international business program expects that the program be of sufficient length to provide a meaningful experience abroad. If the program you select is less than six weeks in length, you will need to either combine it with a second program (e.g. a one month academic program plus another short internship with international content) or combine the short period of study abroad with a year of language study at WWU to satisfy the international experience requirement in the IBUS program.

When you consider studying abroad, you want to assure yourself that you will earn credit toward graduation. Yet if you try to maximize the credit that transfers, you may not maximize your learning. Procedures for credit are discussed below. Remember what you want get out of the program. You are there to gain a different perspective, and challenge yourself to see how you will grow in a very different environment. Take classes that will allow for that. Look for classes that let you observe how people work in teams and how they analyze the world around themselves. Try not to just take classes that you could take at Western Washington University. If possible, take courses with people from the host country. By selecting these kinds of challenging courses, you may not earn exceptional grades, but consider the trade off: you will be much further integrated and will be learning more about the culture. You might even consider taking fewer courses, and getting involved in the culture through a club or sport activities.

There are several ways to get WWU credit.

1) Credit for graduation

INTL 205/305 will allow you to earn credits toward graduation. It is automatically given upon successful completion of a study abroad program. Remember that as a CBE student, you cannot take all your upper division credits in CBE. These outside credits can be INTL 305 if the courses you take abroad are upper division courses. It is sometimes possible to get credit for GUR requirements for courses taken in study abroad on a case by case basis.

2) Credit toward language

If you already have some language ability, consider using this time to significantly improve your language skills. Before you go, check with Modern and Classical Languages (see Advising list below)

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to see what credit will be given for your study. If you already have a good start in the language, you may be able to take enough credits abroad to make progress toward a minor in the language.

3) Credit toward a CBE Degree

The average IBUS student gets two or three courses toward the IBUS degree with a study abroad program. First, you are given one course credit toward your program requirements (in place of one course in the social science/economics set) if you take a course abroad that introduces you to the culture, political system or society of the country where you study. INTL 305 is recorded as one course in your program. Be sure to take a course at the upper division level to assure credit. Second, if there is a course that matches an international course at WWU, it is usually relatively easy to present that course for credit. We prefer you take the core IBUS courses, IBUS 370, Introduction to IBUS, and IBUS 470 International Management at WWU, but exceptions can be made. Third, even if there is no match at WWU, if the course has clear international content, it is possible to transfer the course as MGMT337, International Business Courses Taken Abroad. Note Economics also has this class option.

Of course, you can also take courses in other CBE areas and apply for credit as well. See the advising document for CBE Students for more information.

Steps to take before You Leave for the Program

You will need to go to the foreign study advisor for IBUS to get prior ‘approval’ for any course you want to take. Come with as much documentation as possible, and explain how the study abroad fits into your overall plan for study. Remember that formal approval can only be given after you provide documentation from the class you took abroad. Remember to take the course for a grade.

Steps to Take On Your Return

To get approval for a course taken abroad, formally request approval through the CBE dean’s office. Fill out a CBE Business Course Transfer Credit Evaluation form. A copy is available in the Dean’s Office, or it can be downloaded on the web. Submit it, along with a copy of the syllabus, text used, and any other documentation and an unofficial transcript from the foreign school. The form is then routed to the departments and they sign off and it is officially recorded.

Even with all this, it is unlikely that you will be able to get full credit for your study abroad within CBE. Think of the study as something that will set you apart from others as you continue your business career. Everyone will have the basic business courses. If you do both a full business program AND the study abroad, you have something that is not easily replicated by students who have not gone abroad. If you think about the program that way, it may make a lot of sense to take courses that really immerse yourself in the culture and maximize the learning.

Advising

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Revised 11/10