

WHEN SHOULD I STUDY ABROAD?

A guide to help you decide whether to study abroad during semester(s), summer(s), or January



IT DEPENDS!

USE YOUR RESOURCES:

Academic Advisors

Academic advisors can help you create your Four-Year Plan, a great tool for identifying the best term(s) for you to study abroad. They can also provide important information for students in your major to consider (e.g., a course may be available on-campus only in fall, or maybe you should stay stateside the term you prepare for the MCAT.)

SMU Abroad Program Specialist

Every student is assigned to one of two program specialists based on their major. Once you have an idea of the courses you need or want to take, they can advise you on when and where you can go. They are most familiar with your program options.

Peer Advisors & Ambassadors

Peer advisors are trained to assist you with your program search and general questions. Peer advisors and student ambassadors have studied abroad, and can share their own experiences to help you make a decision on when to go abroad.

ASK YOURSELF:

- When can I go abroad?
- Which classes do I need to take?
- Which classes would I like to take?
- How long do I want to be abroad?
- Do I prefer cold or warm weather?
- Where do I want to go?
- Which programs can I afford?
- Do I want to be with SMU students or with students from other universities?
- What do I hope to gain from this experience? What are my goals?
- Are there any important events I need to attend in the US?
- Are there any important events I would like to attend internationally?



KEEP UP WITH US!



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SEMESTER

COST

During the semester, you will be charged SMU tuition and fees. You will have additional program costs such as housing and meals. The financial aid and scholarships you typically receive usually follow you abroad. Depending on where you study, a semester abroad will cost close to what it costs to stay on-campus.

PROS: Affordable for most; scholarships available; during a term you would pay for whether on campus or abroad.
CONS: Costs vary greatly by program.

CURRICULUM

You take a full course load: 12-18 hours over 3-4 months. You can take courses for your major(s), minor(s), or the UC. Programs are taught at study centers or universities abroad. Some programs offer internships, research, and service-learning opportunities.

PROS: Access to a variety of courses and universities.
CONS: Specific courses are not always guaranteed. SMU credit is awarded through a Course Approval process.

CULTURE

You can travel to dozens of locations across over 100 programs. You will be immersed in a different culture for three to four months. You will have a "second home" and become more proficient in the language, if not English. You will be more independent and will be one of few SMU students, if not the only SMU student.

PROS: More independence and immersion.
CONS: In country-support is available, but there is a greater expectation for student independence.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- More time and freedom to explore other cities and countries.
- Increase in language proficiency much more likely.
- More control over your experience.
- There are more locations and academic disciplines available.

SUMMER

COST

During the summer, you will be charged SMU tuition based on 6, 7, or 8 credit hours. You will also be charged a standard program fee that covers room and board and other program activities. Students receiving merit-based scholarships during the year will receive a pro-rated amount for summer. Unused loans may also be available.

PROS: Costs are standardized across programs; cost per credit-hour is lower than during the semester.
CONS: Financial assistance is available but limited; summer is an additional term beyond your expected 8 semesters at SMU.

CURRICULUM

You take a full course load: 6-8 hours in 4-8 weeks. A variety of courses across programs are available. Some programs offer internship opportunities. SMU faculty direct and teach on most summer programs.

PROS: Guaranteed courses; SMU faculty; automatic SMU credit.
CONS: Course options per program are limited and vary by summer.

CULTURE

Your program courses will reflect some aspect of the culture and much of your day-to-day activities will be pre-determined by the program's schedule of classes and excursions. While most of your time will be spent with the group of SMU students, you can explore the culture on your free nights and weekends.

PROS: Program includes cultural excursions.
CONS: Exposure to culture is limited by program parameters.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Doesn't interfere with academic schedule for students with less flexibility in their majors.
- Doesn't interfere with extracurricular events or holidays during the school year.
- If you are nervous about being abroad, especially for the first time, you are only away 1-2 months.

JANUARY

COST

During January, you will be charged SMU tuition for 3 credit hours. You will also be charged a standard program fee that covers room and board and other program activities. Students receiving merit-based scholarships during the year may receive a pro-rated amount for January. Because of the low credit hour requirement, little need-based aid is available.

PROS: Costs are standardized across programs; cost per credit-hour is lower than during the semester; January is the cheapest term abroad.
CONS: Financial assistance is available but limited; January is an additional term beyond your expected 8 semesters at SMU.

CURRICULUM

You take a full course load: 3 hours in 10-12 days. There is one course per program. SMU faculty direct and teach on all January programs.

PROS: Guaranteed courses; SMU faculty; automatic SMU credit
CONS: Course options per program are limited and vary by term.

CULTURE

Your program course will reflect some aspect of the culture and much of your day-to-day activities will be pre-determined by the program's schedule of classes and excursions. As the program takes place in such a short time frame, most of your time will be spent with the group of SMU students. You may, however, wish to arrive earlier or stay later, since the program takes place during winter break.

PROS: Program includes cultural excursions.
CONS: Exposure to culture is limited by program parameters.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Doesn't interfere with academic schedule for students with less flexibility in their majors.
- Doesn't interfere with extracurricular events or holidays during the school year.
- If you are nervous about being abroad, especially for the first time, you are only away a couple weeks
- This may be the last chance for seniors to study abroad!