

University of Southern Maine
Office of International Programs and National Student Exchange
Bringing the World to Mind

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the major requirements to study away?

Students planning to study away must be highly motivated successful students. This means a minimum grade point average of 2.5, however, a 2.8 or 3.0 is required for many programs. Intellectual curiosity and personal flexibility are important traits to cultivate in oneself prior to beginning any period of study away. Only U.S.M. degree candidates are eligible. If you were admitted through the U.S.M. admissions office, that's you!

2. Where can I study away?

Study opportunities are available at 190 universities throughout the USA and over 200 universities throughout the world. Examples of national sites include California, Texas, Ohio, Alaska and Hawaii. Examples of international schools include Canada, Argentina, China, Australia, Ireland, London, and the Netherlands.

3. Do I have to speak another language to study away?

No, you do not need to be fluent in another language to study away. There are many English speaking study away programs. Some universities have a required number of years that you must have studied the host language. Most universities will test you upon arrival and put you into classes that will most match your level of fluency.

4. When can I study away?

Before you can study away you need to be a matriculated degree student. Students should have completed a minimum of 24 U.S.M. degree credits prior to their departure. *Some exceptions may exist for Transfer Students. Please ask the International Programs staff for more information.* You should have completed some courses from both your major and the CORE requirements. However, it should be early enough in your program so that you still have some flexibility with regards to the courses that you need to complete. The most important issue is to determine when is the best for you, academically and personally.

5. How long can I study at another university?

Depending on which program you choose, you can study for 3 weeks during the summer, one semester or for the entire year. You EVEN can study on National Student Exchange for a year, THEN study internationally.

6. How much does it cost to study away?

U.S.M. has a number of established programs in which you pay U.S.M. tuition. However, there are also a number of programs set up by other universities that allow the same low cost. Scholarships are available for international study.

7. Can I use my U.S.M. Financial Aid to study away?

Yes, your aid package will be based on your study away program costs.

8. Will I receive full credit if I study away?

On pre-approved programs you will get full credit for your studies away. It is important to note that credit is based on the transcript which is received from your host university. You should also be prepared to bring back your work, the books and the syllabi that you used for your studies away, so that accurate course equivalences can be established.

Credits through National Student Exchange will be posted on your U.S.M. transcript under the appropriate semester and they will be factored into your cumulative GPA.

Credits earned through International Exchange will be listed on your U.S.M. transcript as "transfer credits" and although the grades will be listed, these credits will not be factored into your cumulative GPA.

9. Is study away limited to certain majors?

You can be majoring in any subject as long as you explain the reasons why study away will help you in your academic career.

10. If I decide to study away, what is my next step?

Application deadlines are early October and late February each year for international exchange and mid-February for priority placement through National Student Exchange. Spring placements for National Exchange are available through early October, although school choices may be limited. Some programs have earlier deadlines so it is best to start planning at least one year in advance and work closely with the staff members in the Office of International Programs. See #12 below for next steps.

11. Does U.S.M. offer travel courses with U.S.M. faculty?

Yes! Anyone who has completed at least 15 undergraduate credits and has at least a 2.0 GPA can enroll in a travel course and earn U.S.M. credit. These courses are offered regularly through the U.S.M. Summer and Winter Session Office (780-5617). Visit their websites for more details: www.usm.maine.edu/summer and www.usm.maine.edu/winter.

12. What should I do now?

A. Visit our website at www.usm.maine.edu/international!

B. Make sure you meet the minimum criteria for Study Away (see item #1 above).

C. Review the study away options available through the Office of International Programs and National Student Exchange based on:

- ~ your major field of study
- ~ personal interest
- ~ career goals
- ~ language skills

D. Narrow your institutional choices to 5 or 6

E. Make an appointment to meet with Kimberly, Larisa, or Kaoru (780-4959).

- ~ review your choices
- ~ refine your list of options
- ~ discuss the qualities of a successful application

F. Prepare a full application to meet the appropriate deadlines (See #10 above).