



Roane State Community College
International Education
Study-Abroad Programs

Students' Study Abroad Handbook

Dear Roane State Student:

We want to invite you to consider one of the many RSCC study abroad programs that we offer. Studying abroad may be that defining moment in your education that will change your life. Nothing will be quite the same after you have studied abroad. Whether for one or two weeks or for a whole semester, studying abroad is a time of learning, observing, practicing new skills, and making new relationships; adventure, discovery, and personal development. When you come back, your perspective will be global, your attitudes will be international and you will have memories that you will carry forever. Your resume will be more attractive; in some cases your language proficiency will be advanced, and you will have developed lifelong friendships.

An idea that prevents students from participating in study abroad is its perceived inaccessibility. Students who study abroad are often surprised at how easy it was to plan it and do it. Financial aid is available, scholarship money is offered, and study abroad at Roane State is an experience available for every student. It's as easy as working through a checklist. And we, at the International Education Office, will guide you and help you step by step.

This handbook should serve as a reference tool to prepare you for your upcoming study abroad experience. This guide should help you explore issues such as credit transfer, passport application, and culture shock.



Why Study Abroad?

- **Experience of a lifetime** - In a couple years you will forget the name of your history professor or your college algebra teacher, but you'll never forget the friends you made or the incredible experiences you shared while studying abroad. You will be a new person with new views, values, and perspectives
- **Academic credit** - The most obvious reason why students study abroad is to earn academic credit. You should consider the type of credit you will earn on your study abroad program. Will you earn core or general education hours? Will you earn credit towards your major or only elective credit? Will you receive a letter grade or pass/fail credit only?
- **Language acquisition** - The world marketplace is shrinking rapidly. Many companies require second languages. Foreign languages are not only valuable in the work force; they are valuable in the real world. Only with an immersion program will you be able to really master a foreign language.
- **Practical experience** - Study abroad coupled with an international internship is an incredible way to gain some real world experience. Additionally, you may find that only an international program can offer the real expertise you desire in your education and that you may not find in institutions at home
- **Resume building** - International experience is ranked high among many employers as a critical asset for prospective employees. Study abroad shows that you are resourceful, adventurous, internationally minded, and diverse.

Where should I go to plan a study abroad program?

Your first consultation should be with Roane State's International Education Director, the most experienced and knowledgeable advisor in study abroad programs. It is probable that RSCC offers a program or can find a program that fits your needs. By going on a study abroad program developed at RSCC, you are more likely to be able to utilize your financial aid or scholarship money and receive credit for the experience.

If you can't find the right program for you at this college, the International Education director will help you find programs that will meet your needs at other institutions or with one of the international consortiums of which RSCC is a member institution. The present director, Dr. Adolf King, can be reached at ext. 2211 or by email at kingaa@roanestate.edu.

How do I start?

Ask the International Education Director for a list of all the programs offered at Roane State or sponsored by any of the consortiums of international education. Choose the one closest to your major or closest to your own personal interest. For instance, if you have always wanted to visit a European country, look for a program that involves study in Europe. If you want to become fluent in Spanish, look at programs to study in a Spanish-speaking country.

With whom should I meet before I decide?

- **Faculty members teaching the study abroad classes** – We have several study abroad programs each year. Look at all of them and consider which one is most suited to your major and academic interests. Talk with the professors teaching the various programs and find out the requirements and objectives of the classes.
- **International Education director** - She/he can tell you what you need to know and who you need to see. Our job is to make sure you are prepared for your experience and that you will gain the most from your study abroad program.
- **Academic advisor** – Talk to your advisor about your goals. Your advisor will help you to decide the right type of program that you need for your career goals and for your major. Your academic advisor can tell you what type of credit you're likely to receive and how it will fit into your overall degree.
- **Financial aid advisor** – Unless you are financially independent, you will need to work closely with the Financial Aid director. Most study abroad participants utilize some form of financial aid for their experience. The Financial Aid director will advise you about how much out-of-pocket money you will need for the program of your choice.

What should I do once I decide to join a program?

- Once you decide to join one of our interesting programs, apply for it. Fill out an application to study abroad from the International Education office.
- Talk to the professor leading the program and request detailed information. Find out about credits earned, requirements, meetings, assessment methods, and meetings both before and after the stay abroad.

I have been accepted to join a program. What else do I need to do before traveling abroad?

Here is your check list:

- **Register for the class.** All our study-abroad programs give you academic credit. Register and stay in touch with the lead professor. Also, be aware of the deadlines for deposits and full payments. All payments are due at the Business Office of Roane State.
- **Consider taking other classes that would prepare you for the experience.** Roane State offers classes that would help you understand other cultures. For instance, Cultural Anthropology (SOC 211) will help you understand and appreciate other cultures, learn about ethnocentrism, and understand cultural relativism. Introduction to Global Studies (INTL 1010) will give you a global perspective and will help you see your country in relation to the rest of the world. A World Literature class (ENGL 2310 or 2320) or a World History class (HIST 1210 or 1220) will provide insights into other lifestyles and perspectives. Foreign Language classes prepare you to communicate in countries where that language is spoken.

- **Attend all pre-departure meetings** – These are important to help you understand the ins and outs of traveling and details that you will need for the success of your experience abroad. Remember that this is an educational experience but also a life experience and you should be prepared for it mentally and emotionally.
- **Get a passport** - Apply several months before you leave. You must apply in person if you are obtaining your first U.S. passport. If you have an expired passport, you can renew it by mail. You can pick up an application form at the Oak Ridge County Clerk or at the Knoxville Passport office. You may also apply at travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. When you apply, bring proof of U.S. citizenship. You must also bring proof of identity, such as a driver's license, a current student or work ID, or an old passport. You will also need two 2"x2" photos of yourself taken in the past six months. The processing fee costs around \$60.00. When you receive your passport, make a copy of the page that has all your identification information and keep it in a separate place from your passport. If your passport is lost or stolen, the copy will make it easier to get a new one. Please give a copy of your passport to the International Education office.
- **Find out if you need a visa** - If your country of destination requires a visa, apply for it as soon as possible because processing time varies from country to country. Sixty percent of the world's countries require visas for any length of stay. Embassy addresses and phone numbers can be found at www.embassiesabroad.com.
- **Visit the International Travel Clinic in Knoxville** – The clinic briefs you about immunizations needed in the country to which you want to travel and provides health information and warnings. The address is Knox County Health Department; International Travel Center; 140 Dameron Ave., Knoxville, 865-215-5070. The website is: http://www.knoxcounty.org/health/internatl_travel-vaccinations.php
- **Get your shots** - The Center for Disease Control offers up-to-date information as well. You should also consult your doctor.
- **Get a student ID** - International student IDs provide you with discounts at museums, for youth admissions and transportation fares, and other great discounts. In many cases your student ID from your school will suffice. The additional benefit of an international student ID is the travel insurance, which usually includes minimal accident, health, repatriation and medical evacuation insurance. The ISIC card can be found at www.myisic.com.
- **Consider a phone card** - Do a little research and find out how you'll be communicating with your people back home. Phone cards are great but they don't always work. There is an e-kit which combines voice mail, e-mail and phone card with conversions at the cheapest rates; see www.goabroad.ekit.com/ekit/home. Another recently developed option is **PicCell Wireless** which also provides reliable, low-cost cell phones to study abroad students and world travelers.
- **Get insured** – RSCC will help you with a comprehensive travel insurance that includes medical evacuation and repatriation. You need to have health insurance at home in case of an emergency when you are repatriated to the country.
- **Develop a budget** - Consider the in-country costs before you go. Consider the costs of optional activities, gifts, school supplies, internet access, in-country transportation and general living costs. Depending on the length of your trip, you should develop a budget and live by it.

- **Learn about your destination** – We encourage you to do some preparation for living in the area of the world in which you will be a guest. The more you know about the country and its society, the less degree of culture shock you will experience. Regardless of how diverse you are and with no regard to your language ability, and whether you are traveling for a week or spending a semester abroad, you're bound to experience culture shock. One of the ways to have a better experience is to have realistic expectations and to read everything you can about your future home.
- **Fill out all the required forms** – The International Education office will give you several forms that you need to fill out before departing. Come to the office and we will give you every paper needed and will explain to you the purpose of each one. Some of the forms require the signature of a notary public. We have one on campus who can help you.
- **Talk to your physician** - discuss any health or medications issues that you may need to address while studying abroad or that may prevent you from traveling. If you have a medical condition that may require you to see a doctor while abroad, and/or take medications that may need to be changed or adjusted, get a release letter from your doctor and a letter explaining your condition. Give a copy to the lead professor, leave a copy at the International Education Office, and keep a copy for yourself.
- **And remember . . . pack light!** - You won't need make-up in Haiti; your blow dryer won't work in Seville. You will not need there many of the things that you consider necessary here. Pack light! Research your destination in advance. Find out what kind of items you must bring (for example, mosquito spray, sun block, or tampons) and find out what items you can purchase cheaply there. Pack the following to take with you:
 - Passport and visas
 - written prescriptions or medications in original labeled containers
 - photo copy of passport ID page and credit cards
 - extra passport size photos
 - RSCC Study Abroad Handbook
 - personal journal

Are there specific rules of conduct while studying abroad?

Yes, you should remember that when you take off to your study abroad destination, you are still a Roane State Community College student and you are expected to behave accordingly and follow all the rules of good conduct expected of you when you are on campus. You should also remember that as citizen of Tennessee and of the United States, you serve as ambassador to countries that you visit.

While you are engaged in your foreign adventure, it is crucial that you familiarize yourself with the laws of the country which has welcomed you and obey them at all cost because certain infractions of the law may put you in jail indefinitely or may detain you in that country. Therefore, conduct yourself as a law-abiding visitor.

For details of the behavior expected of you while you are abroad, you may view the student handbook online at www.roanestate.edu; keyword: student handbook. These are some basic rules of conduct common to all our study abroad programs:

- All study-abroad programs are alcohol-free. The consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited
- The use of illegal drugs is strictly forbidden
- Any curfew established by the lead professors should be strictly followed
- You should comply with all directions or expectations and participate in all group activities
- Disorderly conduct during a study abroad trip is not accepted. Disorderly conduct is defined as being “abusive, obscene, lewd, indecent, violent, excessively noisy, disorderly” or any behavior “which unreasonably disturbs other groups or individuals”

If your behavior is not acceptable at any time during a study abroad program, the lead professor may give you a first written warning. After a second warning, you may be expelled from the program and sent back home at your own expense. Additional consequences would be failing the class and possibly receiving further disciplinary actions by the college.

What should I do to enjoy the experience?

- Plan to make the most of your study abroad opportunity! Decide to have a great adventure and to make it a positive and rewarding experience! Characteristics that play a vital role in your success abroad are: patience, flexibility, adaptability, team work, sense of responsibility, and sense of humor
- Avoid rigid ideas of "right" and "wrong" ways to do things. You will find that other societies do things differently from ours, but they function just as well or even better. Be open to new ways and new perspectives.
- Accept that you will very likely be homesick for a few days. Ask the International Education office to provide you with a handbook on how to deal with homesickness.
- You will most likely find a new perspective on yourself and the world, and you will come back a better person!