

ATTENTION - PROSPECTIVE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MAJORS ONLY!!

San José State University College of Business Dept. of Organization & Management
Study abroad requirement for international business students – effective fall 2009

This applies to all students that enter CSU or a community college in fall 2009 or later and intend to graduate from SJSU with an international business concentration. Those who attended a California community college or CSU prior to fall 2009 and have maintained continuous enrollment are NOT held to the study-abroad requirement.

Excellent programs in international business require students to have enmeshed themselves in a different cultural context; one simply cannot get the experiential cross-cultural insights and understanding without having experienced more than one cultural environment.

For those international business students that start their studies in fall 2009, they will need to complete one of the following study abroad options in order to graduate:

1. a short-term faculty-led CSU course (e.g., there are a limited number of three-week study abroad summer classes available for those unable to go abroad for a semester or year),
2. a semester in a foreign university approved by CSU, or
3. a semester internship with AIESEC or other internship programs approved by the College of Business at SJSU.

Many study abroad programs are in English so fluency in a foreign language need not be a barrier.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Department of Organization & Management can waive the study abroad requirement. Waivers are automatic for the following:

1. international students,
2. students that graduated from high school abroad,
3. students that spent one year of high school abroad, and
4. students that completed a significant volunteer experience such as Peace Corps.

Other waivers for significant international experiences and overseas employment can be granted by the Chair or Vice Chair of Organization & Management on a case by case basis.

A famous anthropologist, Joseph Campbell, once said: "We have only to follow the thread of the hero path And where we had thought to travel outward, we will come to the center of our own existence. And where we had thought to be alone, we will be one with the world."

An international experience is an opportunity to challenge and test oneself. People leave behind their familiar and comfortable life and embark on an adventure, sometimes exhilarating and sometimes lonely and uncomfortable. They face challenges that make them question their identity, values, and assumptions. By learning to cope with and master challenges, people who study and work abroad are often transformed and left with a feeling of mastery and deep satisfaction.

The first step is to accept the call to adventure – to commit to study abroad. One must approach it with enthusiasm and involvement to eventually reap the benefits of a deep understanding and acceptance of the host culture. It's not just another requirement to check off – one must be eager to go abroad.

The typical adventure includes language study, cultural barriers, and self imposed student enclaves that limit involvement with the local culture. Language can only be learned by conversing. Cultural barriers can only be overcome through listening, learning, and adapting. Getting out of the enclave means leaving the comfort of people like you and seeking those that are different than you.

Successful students develop bicultural perspectives, increased self-awareness, and the knowledge that they have the inner resources to master difficult situations.

After returning home, students often miss the daily opportunities to learn new things, the excitement, the feeling of being special and more alive, and the high level of challenge they encountered abroad.

Based on: Osland, J. November 1995. Working abroad: A hero's adventure. Training & Development, 49, Issue 11. For questions, please contact: Asbjorn Osland, Vice Chair and Professor, Organization & Management, at 408-924-3574 or osland_a@cob.sjsu.edu.