

Once again, your support, interest, and understanding will help your son or daughter during this life-altering experience. Observing and discussing changes like these is an excellent way to share in your son or daughter's international experience, and you will probably want to hear more than other people, which will be satisfying to your son or daughter. Most study abroad participants report years later that the time they spent overseas was the best part of their college years—and that it changed them for life.

How IFSA Butler addresses the needs of first generation college students: First generation college students tend to have more vocation-driven goals and see university as a means to a profession, rather than the "transformative experience" that so permeates the traditionally academic elite. After all, they are in college for a reason—to get a job! Recipients of the First Generation Scholar Program, as well as all other IFSA-Butler "first gens," can participate in a post-study abroad resume building session to better encapsulate and articulate skills they've built abroad. Butler University Career Services will help design and lead this online resume building session.

FAQs

What if my son or daughter has a problem abroad?

One of IFSA-Butler's most important services is our onsite office in each country where we have programs. These offices are fully staffed with professionals who conduct orientations and work closely with our affiliated universities in that country, but their primary job is preparing our students for the academic and cultural differences abroad.

We strongly encourage our students to contact their local IFSA-Butler office if they experience any problems on the ground, either personally or related to their studies. Our overseas staff are located in the same time zone, are often locals, and are familiar with the academic and social challenges of study abroad in that country. They are trained to help students solve problems and are always happy to lend guidance or a sympathetic ear.

In addition to maintaining each onsite office, our staff abroad keeps pagers or cell phones for student emergencies. In the event of an emergency outside of office hours, a student can call the emergency number to receive assistance from our staff. And, don't worry. All of our IFSA-Butler staff overseas are bilingual, so if anything should happen they will be able to communicate with you, your student, and our staff here in the U.S.



How do I contact my student while he or she is abroad?

Most parents use a combination of e-mail, telephone, internet programs like Skype, and postal mail to contact students. Whenever possible, IFSA-Butler informs students of their addresses abroad before departure, but in some cases we do not have student addresses until orientation. Nearly all of our affiliated universities assign e-mail addresses to students, but these are not available until after class registration and available for just the term the student studies there. For this reason, we encourage our students to open an Internet e-mail account such as Gmail, Yahoo! or Hotmail so they can send e-mails to friends and family while they're overseas.

If your son or daughter is living in a student apartment abroad, he or she will likely be responsible for setting up and paying for phone service, usually in cooperation with roommates. Many universities still do not provide individual phone lines in dorm rooms. Depending on the country, many students also purchase local cell phones, so they are available by text and mobile calling.

Will my son or daughter be safe?

Understandably, safety is one of the concerns we discuss most often with parents. The universities where we have programs are prestigious, stable, and located in areas with low violent crime rates. Our comprehensive, mandatory orientations address health and safety issues relevant to the country of study and our resident staff are careful to keep students aware of situations that can present danger. In addition, the publications we send to students, both before departure and while abroad, contain information about staying healthy and safe.

Will there be other students studying with my son or daughter? Although there may not be other students from your son or daughter's home college, there will be other IFSA-Butler students from the United States on the same program. We offer group flights for most programs so students need not travel alone.

What hotel and meal arrangements should my son or daughter make for orientation?

Your son or daughter does not need to make hotel arrangements for orientation. IFSA-Butler arranges and pays for orientation accommodation, and most meals during orientation are included in our program fee. If your son or daughter takes our optional group flight, we will arrange for transportation between the airport and the orientation location. For programs with rural orientations, all students (regardless of travel plans) meet at the airport and travel to the orientation site together.

What are our options for paying your program fee?

IFSA-Butler accepts personal checks and credit cards (MasterCard and Visa). All semester and year programs come with the option of TuitionPay, an interest-free monthly payment program.

We also accept transfers of financial aid from your son or daughter's home university. For more information, please visit our financial aid section.

First Generation College Students



FOR FAMILIES

**STUDY.
INTERN.
VOLUNTEER.**

Institute
for Study
Abroad
BUTLER UNIVERSITY

The Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University (IFSA-Butler) recognizes that parents are often one of most pivotal support systems in a college student's time on campus. To this end, we have created specialized materials for first generation college students (those first in their family to go to college) and their families. This information is intended to break down some of the questions that may arise when considering the very important, but often complicated, decision to study abroad.

Why does IFSA-Butler care about first generation college students?

What drives many first generation students to attend college is the promise of an educational investment in future career opportunities. And while first generation students comprise up to 40% of undergraduate enrollment in the United States, they maintain among the highest attrition rates in college overall. "First gens" are less likely to be involved in high-engagement activities such as campus service, honors colleges, undergraduate research, and study abroad—which nurture the very social capital that contributes to success in college.

Why should my student study abroad?

In an increasingly global world, it's important for students to acquire knowledge and experience interacting with foreign cultures and diverse populations right here in the United States. Study abroad provides not only a new perspective, but also allows students to develop new skills, independence, and that self-confidence needed to survive and succeed in the global marketplace. International experience gives students a *competitive edge* when applying for jobs or graduate programs, and also builds foreign language skills and *intercultural understanding*. Hundreds of thousands of college students study abroad each year and the job market has a growing expectation of international experience.

Truly, the opportunity to live and study overseas—with the help of financial aid programs and reputable, safe organizations—is a *once-in-a-lifetime*. By being a college student in the U.S., they are afforded an opportunity most people will never have. You and your student may have a wide range of feelings about the upcoming experience, from excitement at its potential to stress at the idea of being far apart. By understanding each other's feelings and supporting decisions before, during, and after the period of overseas study, you can help your student maximize this opportunity.

Can my student receive credit?

Yes! Absolutely. While some students choose to take general elective courses abroad, most IFSA-Butler students are able to take courses in their major or minor so they stay on track with their degree requirements. Our goal is not to add more semesters to your student's college career. On the contrary, we want him or her to consider study abroad as an integral part of their academic experience in college, rather than a departure from it.

Where can they go?

Just about anywhere—IFSA-Butler has nearly 100 programs around the world. Your student wants to intern for a Fortune 500 company in Sydney, Australia? We do that. Gain Spanish proficiency as a marketable job skill in booming Latin America? No problem. Take elective credit in Egyptology in Cairo? Our students do it all the time.

The opportunities are nearly endless—it is important to have a conversation with your student about his or her goals, what type of credit they will need to take abroad (elective, major, minor, etc), and what your student can afford. We can help with all of that. IFSA-Butler provides experienced advisors to help you and your student determine the best program fit.

Is it expensive?

Study abroad can be extremely affordable—in some cases more affordable than a semester at your student's home campus when you consider peripheral expenses like rent, groceries, campus parking, books, and extracurricular activities. Many factors affect cost in study abroad programs, including:

- **Cost of living** in the host country/city (for example, London, England is far more expensive than Heredia, Costa Rica. Or Lancaster, England for that matter)
- **Length of program:** IFSA-Butler offers semester, year, and even short-term summer study.
- **How many credits earned:** It's important to consider price vs. credits earned. Short-term programs might have a lower bottom line price, but earn fewer credits due to their brief length. Only your family can decide what will work for you and your student's financial options.
- **What's included:** IFSA-Butler considers our program fees to be "all-inclusive." So students have tuition, housing, meals (in many programs), orientation, excursion trips, academic tutors, medical insurance, evacuation insurance, group flights, and a Butler University transcript upon completion included in our program fee. As with any industry, many programs look cheaper at first glance, but it's important to consider nickel-and-dime costs that may lie underneath.

Before Going Abroad

There is quite a lot of preparation that is required prior to a semester abroad—applications, passports, visas, vaccines, travel arrangements, etc. It can be comparable to that of preparing your student for college, and we know how time consuming and bureaucratic that was! When a student applies to one of our programs, IFSA-Butler sends a parent packet containing *Preparing to Study Abroad*, *Money Matters*, and a copy of our insurance brochure. We know you want to be informed about the process as soon as possible.

Preparing to Study Abroad is country-specific and contains information about our programs and policies, immigration, health care, insurance, finances, packing, banking abroad and more pertaining to your student's country of study. We created these booklets in an effort to help students and parents understand our programs and to ease the study abroad transition. *Money Matters* covers the financial aspects of study abroad, from scholarships to financial aid to our contractual agreements with universities throughout the U.S. *Money Matters* also details our payment and billing policies. Each student will also receive a copy of *Preparing to Study Abroad* and *Money Matters* upon application to an IFSA-Butler program, so you're all on the same page.

How IFSA-Butler addresses the needs of first generation college students: The proposition of study abroad—with its associated procedures, cost, documentation, visas, academic planning and inevitable geographic separation—is often daunting and discouraging. For this reason, the First Generation Scholar Program combines scholarships in the form of discounts, as well as upfront capital for passport, visa fees and airline tickets to eliminate the barriers that may be perceived and associated with studying abroad. Tell your student to look at this as a financial opportunity—all it takes is an essay for consideration.

While Abroad

Study abroad can pose multiple challenges to students as they begin to learn how to maneuver and adapt to their new overseas environment. After facing realities such as unfamiliar university procedures, unexpected difficulty with the local language, commuting woes, and the absence of usual support groups, culture shock can set in. Expect to hear some tales of frustration, though your student will likely be experiencing many wonderful things as well, even if you are not the first to hear about them. In most cases he or she won't expect you to solve problems—as much as you may want to—and is just looking for an understanding ear. It is also important that you have discussed with your student any needs they may have while they are away such as finances and daily budget in addition to any additional insurance coverage to their IFSA Butler plan, and how you intend to communicate while they are away.

How IFSA Butler addresses the needs of first generation college students: as part of the First Generation Scholar Program students will be blogging about their experience-- sharing with others who might be considering a term abroad, process their own experience, and better shape their experience to use in future job opportunities and post study abroad pursuits. Spotlight programs in Mexico and New Zealand have added services to "first gens" while abroad such as peer mentors, pre-professional workshops, tutoring, and practice interview sessions.

Returning from Abroad

After living abroad for a period of time, students simply can't help but be changed by the experience. This can take many forms, from new ways of dressing, to craving different kinds of food, to new political perspectives, and even feeling "homesick" for where they studied abroad. Don't worry too much: any negative feelings usually don't last long, while a realistic view of the United States and their place in the world remains with most students for life. Be prepared for your student to experience some degree of reverse culture shock—most do—and need some time to fully readjust to living at home again. In some cases, he or she may even experience a period of depression or longing to return abroad. This is in no way a reflection of an unhappiness to be home—on the contrary, most students are thrilled to see their family upon return, they are often just melancholy about the end of a very transformative experience.

