Study Abroad in *Biology*

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http://biology.ucsd.edu/undergrad

Study abroad programs are increasingly being recognized by major US universities as an important way of enhancing international understanding, knowledge, and cooperation. Many universities, including the University of California, have embarked on plans to include study abroad as an integral part of the undergraduate experience. The UCSD Division of Biological Sciences welcomes these efforts and encourages its students to take advantage of the diverse study abroad opportunities available through the UC Education Abroad Program **(EAP)**, UC San Diego's Global Seminars **(GS)**, and UC San Diego's Opportunities Abroad Program **(OAP)**. Students can choose to study in English-speaking or in non-English speaking countries if they have the language competency. Opportunities to study in non-English speaking countries with the option of taking some courses in English are also available. Biology majors have been participating in study abroad programs for a number of years. Biology sends the highest number of students abroad after Political Science and Economics!

"I tell students that it is one thing to travel abroad for a few weeks, but quite another to actually live in a foreign country and really begin to know its people and assimilate to its culture. I tell them that it will be an invaluable but often humbling experience that will leave them and their view of their own country forever changed. When biology majors tell me there is not time in their schedule to spend a quarter or two or three abroad, I ask them "what's your rush?" That job opening in biotech, or that slot in medical school or graduate school will always be there next year, but the opportunity to live and study in a foreign country will not!" **--Robert Schmidt, Professor of Biology, UCSD**

Why study abroad?

The Division of Biological Sciences supports study abroad because we recognize that it provides substantial tangible and intangible benefits for the student. Tangible benefits include the ability to integrate study abroad with their short term and long range educational goals. Students may be able to satisfy course requirements for the different majors or choose to take courses not part of our curriculum and which would complement Division offerings. For example, many students have traveled to Costa Rica and Austrailia in order to participate in special field programs such as marine and tropical biology. In addition, students can satisfy college or other general education requirements for graduation. Perhaps equally important are the intangible benefits that follow from studying abroad. Many study abroad returnees have commented on the personal growth and maturation that marked their period abroad, such as the expansion of their intellectual and cultural horizons that came from the immersion in a foreign society. Other benefits include the development of an awareness of and sensitivity to international and global concerns, increased self-confidence in learning to adapt to a different academic structure and style of education, development of skills and knowledge to operate in an international arena, improvement in the command of a foreign language, and development of friendships with students and faculty at the host university that may form the basis for future research and teaching.

What are my first steps?

1. Attend a First Steps session. Sign up at: http://pao.ucsd.edu
2. Visit http://pao.ucsd.edu
3. Start your research in the Programs Abroad Library
4. Meet with a Programs Abroad advisor
5. Fill out your Academic Planning Form
6. Visit with an advisor in Biology
7. Visit your college advising office

When should I study abroad?

While it is possible for Biology majors to go abroad at almost any point in their academic careers, the particular quarter, semester, summer, or year that you study abroad depends on your individual progress in your major and what courses you plan to take while abroad.

Pyramids at Teotihuacan, Mexico

Requirements

Depending on the major, students can potentially take up to five courses, 20 quarter units, towards their major requirements. For exact course substitution, the course needs to be equivalent. It may be easier to apply study abroad courses to the upper-division elective courses within the major.

What classes should I take?

EAP students automatically earn UC credit for the work they complete abroad. However, application of credit to major requirements is subject to the discretion of the division. The EAP Course Catalog (https://myeap.eap.ucop.edu/Galileo/Service/CourseCatalog/CourseCatalog.aspx) lets you search courses taken by UC students over the last 5 years.

OAP students earn transfer credit for the work they complete abroad, and application of credit to major requirements is also subject to the discretion of the division.

Where should I study abroad?

You will find coursework relevant to your major in Biology at many EAP study centers. Course Catalog (https://myeap.eap.ucop.edu/Galileo/Service/CourseCatalog/CourseCatalog.aspx) can help you find programs that meet your needs.

If you can't find a program, university or country that suits your needs through EAP or GS, try OAP! Two sites that will help you in your search are http://www.goabroad.com/ and http://www.studyabroad.com/.

Here are just a few of the programs and universities where Biology majors have studied:

- **Marine Biology and Terrestrial Ecology, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia**
  - The Marine Biology and Terrestrial Ecology Program is offered through the University of Queensland's Centre for Marine Studies (CMS). EAP's program consists of lectures, laboratory studies, and extensive field study at the Heron Island Research Station on the Great Barrier Reef, the Moreton Bay Research Station, and other locations in coastal Queensland.
- Environmental Science and Biology, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia
- **Tropical Biology and Conservation Program, Monteverde, Costa Rica**
  - Plant-animal interactions, ecology, evolution, behavior, natural history, taxonomy, conservation, and discipline-specific Spanish. Courses combine lectures, extensive field trips, and independent research that will teach you how to ask and answer a research question. You also have the opportunity to use video to document natural phenomena and behavior. At the end of the program, you present your research in a symposium open to the public.
- Tropical Marine Ecology and Conservation Program, Bonaire, Southern Caribbean
- University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, Barbados
- Field Research Program, Mexico
- Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, School of Science
- University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa
- Lund University, Sweden
- King's College, University of London, England

EAP system-wide recommendations for students of the biological sciences can be found at http://eap.ucop.edu/prospective_participants/disciplines/biological_sciences/default.shtm

PRIME Program: UCSD (http://prime.ucsd.edu/)

The Pacific Rim Experiences for Undergraduates (PRIME) program provides undergraduates with the opportunity of doing real research while living for nine weeks in one of several Pacific Rim countries, working with mentors at both the host institution and at UC San Diego.Students who participate in PRIME are working side-by-side with researchers of their host country. The students literally integrate into the culture of their host country on a day-to-day basis. They experience first-hand that pre-judging, impatient listening, and just tolerating (rather than embracing) somebody's difference impedes communication and the ability to work well together. Students become aware that different approaches to viewing issues or solving problems lead to different insights, which drives innovation and thinking outside the box. This lesson applies well beyond science. Most importantly, students participating in PRIME learn humanity and appreciate the value in any cultural system, therefore developing a perspective that allows them to become compassionate and effective doctors.

Stingrays, Great Barrier Reef, Australia

What will it cost?

Study on EAP/OAP can be comparable to the cost of study at UC. In some cases, it is less. EAP participants pay UC fees and continue to receive UC financial aid while abroad. Furthermore, EAP students are eligible for special grants and scholarships from UC, the host country, and other sources.

OAP students may retain all or some of their funding while abroad, including special study abroad scholarships, but because of the variety of the programs found through OAP, costs for individual programs can vary greatly.

Check here for specific information about scholarships and financial aid: http://programsabroad.ucsd.edu/pao/funding.htm

What happens when I return?

Once the study abroad courses have posted to your UCSD academic record, submit an undergraduate student petition along with pertinent course information (course syllabi, description and papers/exams submitted and received back) to Biology Student Affairs, Pacific Hall 1128. The faculty advisor for your major will review the petitions and make final approval on coursework.

"My Study Abroad experience changed how I thought about myself, my life, and my career. I changed my major from Bioengineering to a double major in Ethnic Studies & Biology after studying abroad, and led me to a career of Public Health. I am now in Graduate School, and have found that I want to help people internationally on a health level. My experience of studying abroad definitely shaped my career choice and has opened so many doors, including that of graduate school and jobs!"

- **UCSD alum**

university of california eap education abroad program

OAP

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