

## YOUR GUIDE TO SELECTING A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

Follow these very important guidelines for selecting a **Goucher-sponsored study abroad program** to ensure that you have followed all appropriate Goucher College and Office of International Studies (OIS) policies. Please make certain that you understand everything thoroughly and be aware that this process takes effort, motivation, and patience.

If you have any questions after reading this handout, attending the required group advising session, or searching for a program, please make an appointment with OIS. Our best advice to you is to start this process at least one year in advance so that you can meet all requirements, confirm your eligibility, and make all deadlines.

### Attend a Group Advising Session

All students who study abroad are required to attend a group advising session in OIS that lasts approximately 30 minutes and covers topics such as how to explore program options, apply for a study abroad program, obtain academic credit for study abroad, and organize financial matters.

### Research All Program Options

OIS encourages you to explore all of Goucher College's study abroad programs— semester, yearlong, and Intensive Courses Abroad (ICAs)—and ask yourself the following questions when researching program options:

#### Objectives:

- Why do you want to study abroad?
- Do you want to learn another language?
- What kind of graduation requirements do you want to fill?
- Will you study something you can't study here?

#### Classes:

- What do you want to take?
- Do you want to study with other Americans or with host nationals?
- Would you be able to adapt well to a different academic environment? (Be sure to find out about the educational systems of the programs and countries that interest you.)
- What is the grading system like? (Be sure to understand how the foreign credit system works and how it will translate to Goucher credits.)

#### Language:

- Do you want to learn a language?
- What is your proficiency level?
- Do you want to take classes in English? (Keep in mind the Foreign Language Department must approve all foreign language classes taken abroad.)

#### Location:

- Where do you want to go and why?
- Do you want to be in a big city or small town?
- Are you interested in a particular culture?

**Living situation:**

- Would you like to live in a dorm with other Americans or with host-country students?
- Would you live with a family in a homestay?

**Money/costs:**

- What is included in the program fees?
- Are there any added expenses?
- How is the dollar doing in the host country?
- Will I be able to afford living in a particular location?
- Are there any scholarships?

**Host institution:**

- How many students go to the school?
- How big are the classes?
- What is the teaching style?
- Where are the dorms located?
- What services do they provide?
- Is there a sports facility? (Find out as much as you can about the host institution. Talk to other Goucher students who have participated in the same program.)

**Meet Eligibility**

Before studying abroad, you must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- **Class standing:** You must declare a major before being eligible to study abroad. In rare instances, second semester sophomores will be approved to enroll in semester programs. The norm for Goucher semester and academic year programs is for students to complete two years on campus before going abroad. OIS cannot guarantee that any sophomore will be accepted by the host institution.
- **GPA:** Semester or academic year program GPA requirements vary, but usually range from 2.5 to 3.6. Students on academic probation are ineligible to study abroad on any program.
- **Language requirements:** If you would like to study abroad on a semester/academic year program in a location where courses are taught in the target language, you must meet appropriate requirements. For semester programs, you should be enrolled in the foreign language the semester before departing and meet program-specific requirements. Typically, students must have at least four college semesters or the equivalent to participate in a foreign language program.

If you are majoring in a foreign language, you must spend a semester in a Goucher program: University of Salamanca for Spanish, Eberhard Karls Universitat for German (for German minors), and the Paris Program for French.

You must also complete a Foreign Language Certification Form (HERE) as part of the application process for semester programs. This form is comprised of an oral interview with an appropriate member of the foreign language department. OIS cannot accept a student into a foreign language program without the necessary department approval.

- **Disciplinary status:** You must submit a Disciplinary Records Release Form (HERE), which must be completed by the Dean of Students. OIS reviews the release form and reserves the right to deny acceptance to any students who have problematic disciplinary histories.

### **Follow All College Policies for Studying Abroad**

- **OIS deadlines:** If you participate in a Goucher semester, summer, or winter study abroad program, you are required to fill out an application in OIS and meet all OIS deadlines.
- **Credit policies:**
  - Goucher College has a residency requirement, which means your last 12 credits must be taken at Goucher College. (Students may participate in Goucher College programs during the fall semester of their senior year, but may not participate in semester programs during the spring semester of their senior year.)
  - All classes taken abroad must be taken for a letter grade—Pass/Fail is not an option.
  - If you are studying abroad for a semester, you must take a minimum of 12 Goucher credits and maintain full-time student status.
  - All classes you take while abroad must be pre-approved by your academic advisor. (You will fill out a Course Approval Form as part of your OIS application.)
  - You will receive Goucher credit for your approved coursework. (Your coursework will appear on your transcript and go into your GPA.)
- **Financial aid and scholarships:** You can utilize institutional aid for Goucher semester or academic year programs. If you have federal aid, you must take at least 12 credits. The Study Abroad Costs, Financial Aid, and Scholarships form (HERE) provides further details.

### **Choose Your Program**

After research and careful consideration, it is now time to make your selection. Be sure to take note of all OIS deadlines. OIS recommends meeting with your academic advisor to discuss the courses you intend to take and how they will count towards your degree—It is imperative that you have support from your academic advisor.

### **Submit an OIS Application**

Stop by OIS to pick up an application. If your application is approved, you will receive an approval letter and packet within 3-4 weeks of the application deadline. If you do not meet all the necessary criteria, you will receive a letter stating that you have not been approved.

# PARTICIPATING IN A NON-GOUCHER-SPONSORED PROGRAM

If, after exploring all Goucher-sponsored study abroad programs, you do not find one that meets your needs and interests, please follow these guidelines for participating in a program sponsored by another institution.

## Research Non-Goucher Programs:

- There are numerous internet sites that will help you explore programs from hundreds of institutions and organizations, and OIS has several resource books you may use, including *Academic Year Abroad* and *Short-Term Study Abroad*. (These books cannot be checked out, but recent versions are in the library.)
- Check out your home state university study abroad programs—You may qualify for in-state tuition.
- Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Who is the program sponsor?
  - Is it a reputable institution?
  - How long has the program existed?
  - How many students go on it?
  - Do you think the study abroad advisors are helpful and organized?
  - Who issues the official transcript?
  - Will the program sponsor meet all Goucher policies listed below?
  - Can you speak with students who have participated in the program? (Call the program sponsor and ask questions. OIS cannot do any of this for you.)

\*Please note that the following programs are not approved by Goucher College: Semester at Sea; SEAmester; Bond University in Queensland, Australia; and University of Roehampton in London.

## The Petition Process

After meeting with an OIS advisor, you must submit a formal petition to be approved for participation in a non-Goucher program. Instructions for the petition are given only after the student meets with an OIS advisor. Your intended program must meet the following conditions to be considered for approval:

- Your intended course of study is not available in Goucher College's study abroad programs.
- You will receive an official transcript from an institution accredited in the United States or an international institution recognized by the Ministry of Education in that country. (This is a Goucher College policy governing transfer credit and can be found in the Academic Catalogue.)

***There are no exceptions to these conditions.***

## Meet OIS Deadlines

Once a petition is approved, you are required to fill out an OIS application and meet all OIS deadlines. Keep in mind that you will also have to fill out your program sponsor's application, mail it directly to them, and meet their deadlines. In some cases, OIS will have deadlines that take place before your program sponsor's deadlines.

## Remaining Enrolled

If your application for a program sponsored by another institution or organization is approved, you will remain enrolled at Goucher while abroad. You do not have to apply for a Leave of Absence unless your petition is not approved or you do not meet deadlines.

## **Credit Policies for Study Abroad on a Non-Goucher Program**

Credit policies for study abroad on a non-Goucher program are the same as listed earlier for Goucher-sponsored programs EXCEPT:

You will receive transfer credit for your approved coursework. This means that your coursework will appear on your transcript but will not be factored into your GPA. In order to obtain transfer credit, you must earn a minimum of a C. Transfer credit will only be accepted from regionally accredited colleges and universities or international institutions recognized by the Ministry of Education in that country. In addition, you cannot receive more than 60 transfer credits at Goucher College. Only 15 transfer credits (total) can be earned in summer or January terms. Please read the Academic Catalogue for further details about transfer credit.

## **Financial Aid and Scholarships**

You cannot utilize any Goucher-based scholarships or aid for a non-Goucher program. You may be able to use some forms of Federal Financial Aid. The only way to determine this is to meet with the OSFA as early as possible, determine the transportability of your aid package, and complete all necessary paperwork.