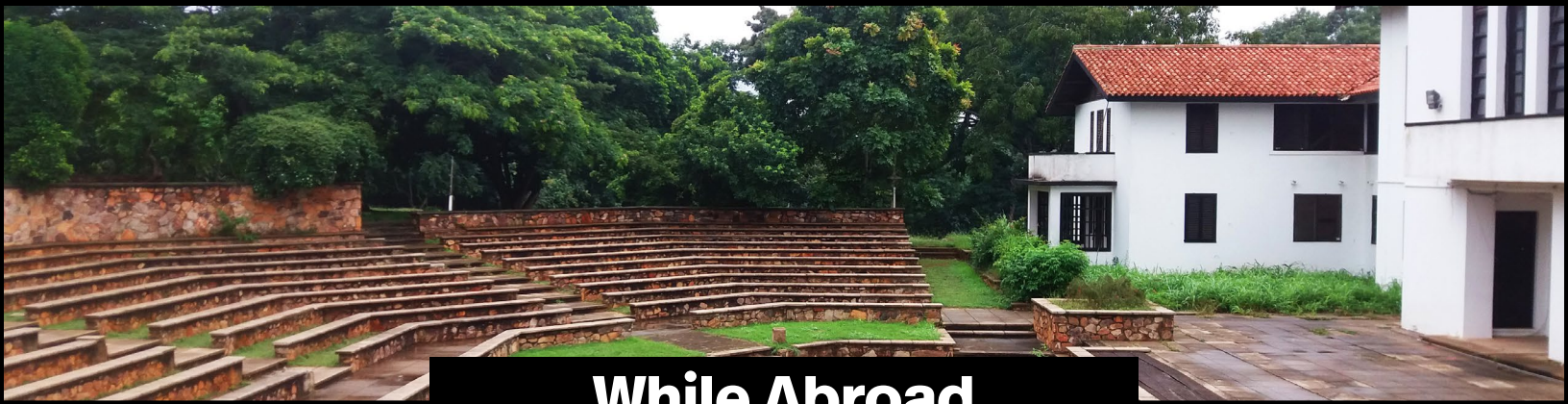




N Northeastern University
Global Experience

Academics in Traditional Study Abroad Resource Guide



While Abroad





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While Abroad



Embracing Intercultural Learning while Abroad

Now that you're abroad, you may feel differently about your expectations or goals for your global experience—this is completely normal. In addition to completing your academic requirements, you are making new friends, traveling on weekends, and exploring a new campus and city, which can be a lot to balance.

Sometimes it can feel frustrating or difficult to immerse yourself in your host culture or navigate cultural differences. This may be especially true if you have not previously been exposed to your host culture or struggle connecting with new people. Your thoughts or feelings about being abroad will change day to day or even moment to moment— and what you're experiencing may be very different from your friends or classmates, even those also studying abroad.

GEO offers a [Digital Badge in Global and Intercultural Communication \(Level 2\)](#) which can be completed before, during, or after study abroad. The Badge is a non-credit, 10-week program that involves asynchronous work in Canvas. It's designed to help you navigate cultural immersion and difference. The badge program runs in both semesters. To sign up, look out for GEO emails or visit the [webpage](#).



Additional tips for embracing intercultural learning while abroad:

- ▶ Join a student club, organization, service learning, or leadership opportunity connected to your host campus or program.
- ▶ Read the local paper from your host university or community and explore the topics discussed.
- ▶ Ask a classmate, roommate, or instructor for recommendations of national or local authors, social media content creators, or streaming shows that provide insight to your host community.
- ▶ Inquire whether your host campus or program has a similar intercultural/global learning module or program available. Some do!
- ▶ Try to self-assess your comfort zone. You may want to pick challenges that force you slightly outside of your comfort zone, but not radically so. That could be playing a pick-up soccer (football) game or going to a festival or holiday celebration you are not familiar with.
- ▶ Although it's tempting to travel extensively while studying abroad, you might find that cultural immersion is deeper if you also explore your local environment, meaning your host city, community, surrounding cities, and country. Focusing on your local area might allow you to better appreciate cultural differences and identities.



Course Evaluations

For traditional study abroad programs, students transfer back their courses from their host university based on Northeastern course equivalencies that are determined by faculty evaluators in each department. This process is facilitated by the Academic Integration & Planning (AIP) team. Northeastern uses a one-to-one course equivalency policy, where each course taken abroad will have a direct equivalency to a Northeastern course. *This means that when courses are evaluated, they are not evaluated based on a single student's need but on the academic content as it relates to the academic divisions and disciplines at Northeastern.*

Ideally, you already know how your study abroad courses are evaluated. However, sometimes there are delays in course equivalencies or you may need to submit a new equivalency while abroad. For example:

- ▶ You didn't submit your equivalencies before you left to study abroad.
- ▶ You changed your courses after arriving at your host institution.
- ▶ A course you thought would be offered at your host institution is not available.

In this situation, follow the instructions on [how to use our course database](#) to see existing equivalencies and submit your courses for evaluation through our system. If you already submitted your evaluation requests, and are waiting for the equivalent, we appreciate your patience.

Course evaluations on average take 6-8 weeks from the time a course is submitted, provided all necessary information is included in the original submission. Each course is reviewed by a faculty volunteer for a Northeastern equivalency. Due to the time-intensive and volunteer nature of this process, delays do occur. Common reasons include high volume of requests and missing information. Courses submitted during peak submission times, at the end of a semester, and during a summer term often take longer to evaluate.

Students can check the status of their course through our submission form. In the bottom left corner of the form there is a "submitted courses" button that displays the courses you submitted for review and their status.

Course Status:

- ▶ **Evaluated:** Evaluation is completed. It may take a few days for an evaluation to appear in our database.
- ▶ **Route to Faculty:** Submission was sent to faculty for review.
- ▶ **Incomplete Information:** The syllabus submitted has insufficient information for an evaluation. Please review what a syllabus should include on here.

Students will receive an email notification when a course is evaluated or if their course submission is ruled "Incomplete Information." Please check your spam inbox for emails.

If you have additional questions about your course submission, please email studyabroadcourses@northeastern.edu.

Changing Your Courses while Abroad

If you are abroad and need to change your courses, first identify the courses at your host institution that are available and then search the Northeastern course equivalency database to see if they are equated. If you need different courses than those already evaluated by our faculty evaluations, you can submit additional courses to be evaluated for Northeastern equivalencies. It's important to remember that not all courses taken at a host university will have Northeastern equivalencies. Some courses will be evaluated as "no transfer."

It is your responsibility to notify your academic and study abroad advisors if your courses abroad have changed. By keeping your advising team updated about your academics, they can help you make decisions about which courses work best for your academic degree plan.

How to Use the Course Equivalency Database

Students can check existing course equivalencies with the [Northeastern Study Abroad Transfer Database](#). This database stores all Study Abroad course equivalencies.

- ▶ Students can use this database to check the equivalency of a course they have submitted for evaluation.
- ▶ In the drop-down menu, select a host institution, then either sort by department or scroll through the courses drop-down menu for a specific course.

Submitting Courses for Evaluation

Courses that have not been evaluated should be submitted for evaluation through our submission platform found on the [Study Abroad & Exchanges website](#) under "courses & transcripts" > "submit course for evaluation." Please read the information and instructions provided before submitting courses for evaluation.

Students will need a complete syllabus with the following components:

- ▶ Course description
- ▶ Learning objectives
- ▶ Detailed list of topics covered/course calendar
- ▶ Details of student assessments (i.e., how the student is graded)
- ▶ Text/readings/learning materials

Faculty evaluators need sufficient information to determine a Northeastern course match. ***If the faculty evaluator determines there is incomplete information, they will not rule on the course and send the submission back to the student without an equivalency until more information is secured.*** A lack of sufficient information leads to a longer turnaround time and delays in the course equivalency process.

Troubleshoot When Submitting a Course for Evaluation

If you encounter issues accessing the submission form, please check the following:

- ▶ Turn on Northeastern University VPN.
- ▶ Try the link in a different browser. Google Chrome sometimes has issues with loading the submission form. We recommend trying Safari or Microsoft Edge.
- ▶ Reset Northeastern University login information.

Timeline for Course Evaluations

Please note that evaluations typically take 6-8 weeks as long as all the necessary information is provided in the syllabus. However, during high-volume periods, it may take longer for a course to be evaluated. Students are not able to request specific equivalencies, and GEO cannot guarantee a specific course equivalency as we are required to honor faculty rulings.

Students should review the information on the [Study Abroad & Exchanges website](#) under “course & transcripts” > “course equivalencies” for more information on submitting courses for evaluation.



Academic Accommodations

The Study Abroad & Exchanges team and Disability Resource Center (DRC) can provide resources and consultations to help you while abroad. For any questions about your accommodations while abroad, please get in touch with their office at [their website](#) or reach out to Mary Barrows, Senior Director, Global Learning Strategies and Student Success in the Disability Resource Center at m.barrows@northeastern.edu.



Helpful Websites

[US Department of State Information for Travelers with Disabilities](#)

[TSA Information on Traveling with Disabilities and Medication Conditions](#)

[GEO My Global Identity Module](#)

[Northeastern Global Experience Office \(GEO\) Website](#)

Grading Scales & Credit Conversions

Each course that you take abroad is assigned a grade and a number of credits, just like they are at Northeastern. These courses and credits will count toward your academic degree plan, and your grades factor into your Northeastern GPA. However, because universities around the world award grades and credit in a variety of ways, the credit and grades for your courses abroad are converted to the Northeastern credit and grade system. The good news is that we've already done that for you! You just need to check out the "academics" tab on the SAE programs search database to understand how many Northeastern credits your courses abroad are equal to and how the grades that you earn abroad will be converted to Northeastern grades to be calculated into your Northeastern GPA. All courses on your study abroad transcript must be transferred back to Northeastern; this includes courses in which you earn failing grades and withdrawal grades.

Important Notes:

- ▶ Courses deemed "no transfer" will not factor into this full-time credit load.
- ▶ If you take an overload of credits your billing will be updated accordingly.
- ▶ The university views courses taken on an approved study abroad program as residency credit and these credits count toward the minimum of 64 Northeastern semester hours to receive a bachelor's degree. Northeastern does not treat study abroad credits as transfer credits.

Grade Anxiety & Academic Stress Abroad

Navigating academics in a new country can be daunting, and it's normal to feel some anxiety about your grades or academic performance. Perhaps you're feeling pressure to excel in unfamiliar learning styles and cultural contexts and have concerns about language barriers affecting your performance in exams and assignments. These are common and valid feelings, but try framing them as learning opportunities and part of the study abroad journey.

Here are a few suggestions to help manage these concerns:

- ▶ **Utilize Support Services:** Your host institution likely offers valuable resources like tutoring and counseling. Take advantage of these services to get academic assistance and emotional support.
- ▶ **Open Dialogue:** Embrace an open dialogue about your academic challenges. Discuss your concerns with your Northeastern study abroad advisor, onsite support team, professors, classmates, or even local students who may face similar challenges. Sharing your experiences can provide insights and alleviate some of the pressure.
- ▶ **Set Realistic Expectations:** It's crucial to set realistic expectations for yourself. Acknowledge that it's okay to not be perfect and that learning involves overcoming challenges. Focus on progress rather than perfection.
- ▶ **Self-Care:** Take breaks to relax and recharge. Explore the local culture, engage in activities you enjoy, and build a support network of friends who can provide encouragement during challenging times. You can reach out to find@northeastern for more direct support with stress, anxiety, homesickness, or feeling overwhelmed.

Remember, your well-being matters just as much as your grades. You're on a remarkable journey, and the growth you experience both academically and personally is an integral part of your study abroad adventure. You've got this!

Academic Policies Abroad

Each host university has unique academic policies around coursework, attendance, late work, etc. These policies may be different than the Northeastern policies you are familiar with. It is your responsibility to learn your host university's policies and adhere to them. Most likely, you can find these policies in your course syllabi, the university website, or your application or acceptance materials. If you need help finding and understanding these policies, please reach out to your study abroad advisor.

Pass/Fail Requests

If you would like to take a course pass/fail, you must adhere to the partner program's course policies and make any pass/fail requests through the host institution. Any course taken for a pass/fail grade abroad and represented as such on an official partner institution transcript will transfer into Northeastern as a pass (S) or fail (U) grade. If you take a course pass/fail, it will not fulfill major, minor, concentration, or NUPath requirements.

Additionally, your Northeastern college may have additional restrictions on the number of Pass/Fail courses you can take during the semester. If permitted at your host institution, you must also adhere to the Pass/Fail course policies set by your home college at Northeastern.

Incomplete Grades

Northeastern does not permit you to take an incomplete while abroad. All coursework must be completed before your departure, and all courses must have a grade assigned to them. If you believe you have extenuating circumstances that require you to complete your academic term outside of the term dates, please contact your study abroad advisor before making any arrangements with your host university.



Changes in Schedule

Course Schedule Changes while Abroad

There are various reasons your study abroad course schedule may change between when you choose a study abroad program and when you start classes abroad. If a course you plan to take is no longer available to you while abroad, you need to identify an alternative course to take. You should review the course offerings from your host institution and cross-reference them with courses in the Northeastern study abroad course equivalency database. It is highly recommended that you choose an alternative course with an existing Northeastern course equivalency. If there is not an existing course equivalency that meets your needs, you will

need to submit the host institution course for evaluation. If you need to submit a course for an evaluation, keep in mind that the turnaround is 6-8 weeks for evaluations. It is highly recommended that you collect and keep all course-related materials for any non-evaluated courses until an equivalency is identified.

With any changes in your academic schedule, you should notify your study abroad advisor and academic advisor.

Maintaining Enrollment Compliance

If you want to drop or withdraw from a course at your host institution, you must adhere to the program partner's course policies and deadlines and make any drop/withdrawal requests through the host institution. If you plan to drop or withdraw from a course, you must make sure that you will remain at full-time status according to both your host institution and Northeastern policies. For Northeastern, you must be enrolled in the equivalent of 12 Northeastern credits. The credit conversion for your host institution is on the program page under academics.

If you drop below the minimum credit requirement, you may be at risk of removal from your study abroad program. If you have a USA study visa, not maintaining compliance with required credit enrollment could violate the terms of your visa and risk your ability to return to Northeastern for your next term. Additionally, because financial aid is tied to your fulltime status, you will likely lose access to funding for your remaining time at Northeastern (not just the one term) and potentially become ineligible for future aid.

With any changes in your academic schedule, you should notify your study abroad advisor and academic advisor.

Billing Adjustments Based on Enrollment

Northeastern uses a Home School Tuition policy model for study abroad, meaning students pay Northeastern tuition for Northeastern credit. This model allows students to utilize any financial aid they would receive for an on-campus Northeastern semester during their study abroad program.

Students are responsible for paying all other expenses out of pocket, including housing, flights, visas (if necessary), and other non-academic costs for which they are billed directly by the program provider or host institution.

Fall and spring semesters: Students are billed Northeastern tuition for a full course load (12-16 credits).

Summer terms: Students are billed Northeastern tuition for 4 credits per course taken abroad. On certain programs, students may be required by the host institution to enroll in a course load that exceeds this range, incurring an overload fee. Tuition costs and overload fees can be confirmed on the [Student Financial Services website](#).

If your credit enrollment total changes while abroad and you believe these changes should trigger a billing adjustment, contact your study abroad advisor.



Withdrawal from Program

If you need to withdraw from your study abroad program after the academic term starts, it's important to communicate this with your study abroad advisor. Whether you need to take medical leave or are facing a personal or family emergency, each situation is reviewed individually, and the study abroad team will work with you to identify options based on your situation.

If you withdraw before the add/drop period at Northeastern, the recommendation, if appropriate, will be to work with your study abroad advisor and academic advisor to enroll you in courses in Boston. However, if the add/drop period has ended, a formal leave of absence may be more appropriate.

If you need to leave a study abroad program toward the end of the term due to a personal or family emergency, some programs allow you to finish coursework and exams from home. You will need to confirm arrangements with both the host institution and your professor before departing and keep your study abroad and academic advisors updated on your plans. Communication is especially important in these situations, and it's important to remember that the Global Experience Office cannot override rules and policies set by your host institution.



Failing while Abroad

Just like at a Northeastern campus, sometimes students earn failing grades while abroad. While this can be stressful and disappointing, try to approach these situations as a reflection and learning opportunity.

If you fail a major assignment or exam in one of your courses abroad, reach out to your professor or attend office hours to discuss your work. Focus on clarifying questions about faculty feedback and how to better prepare for future assignments. If you would like to find tutoring support, you can ask faculty for recommendations, reach out to onsite support staff or your study abroad advisor, or contact Northeastern tutoring services and the writing center for remote services.

If you fail a final exam, your host university may offer retake options. Exam retakes are at the discretion of the host university and follow their specific policies and procedures. Review your course syllabus and the university policies concerning retaking exams. If it is an option, reach out to the faculty teaching your course for more details. If you need to retake the exam after leaving your study abroad site, contact your study abroad advisor to see if they can help proctor the retake exam. When you retake an exam, if your host university has submitted your transcript to Northeastern before your retake grade is calculated, it is your responsibility as the student to request an updated transcript to be sent to Northeastern for processing.

If you fail a course, your study abroad transcript will be processed as normal. The failing grade will be included on your Northeastern transcript and calculated into your Northeastern GPA according to the grade conversion listed on the program page. You cannot drop a failing course from your transcript or opt out of having a course transferred back to Northeastern. Incomplete grades are also not accepted. Once the credit is processed and added to your Northeastern transcript, you will follow Northeastern and your academic department's policies about course retakes. You can read about the Northeastern course retake policy [here](#).



Additional Topics

Academic Support while Abroad

Navigating academics in a new country can be challenging. Your host university likely offers tutoring services and study abroad students can usually access these. Additionally, you can still utilize Northeastern resources while abroad, just make sure to use your Northeastern VPN:

- ▶ [Northeastern Peer Tutoring Resources](#): Offers information and tips for managing academic challenges, and studying strategies
- ▶ [Northeastern Writing Center](#): Offers online consulting appointments for all NU students
- ▶ [Northeastern Library](#)
 - [Chat with a Librarian](#)
 - [Subject Librarians & Specialists](#)

If you're facing unique challenges due to a disability or need additional support, communicate with your study abroad advisor or the Disability Resource Center. They can ensure your academic journey is not only successful but tailored to your needs.

Registering for Northeastern Courses for Your Next Term

While abroad, continue to work with your college academic advisor to navigate changes in your study abroad course load or plan your next semester at Northeastern.

Make sure to keep time zones in mind when scheduling your advising appointments!

If you plan to go on co-op the semester following your term abroad, check your Northeastern email consistently to avoid missing communications with your co-op and academic advisors. When planning interviews with companies in Boston (or wherever you will be), make sure to be in a quiet place with a strong and consistent internet connection.

Studying abroad **does not harm your registration time ticket**. Even if your study abroad courses have not been processed, you do have the equivalent credits based on the placeholder course (ABRD) for which you've been enrolled for your term abroad. Therefore, your registration time ticket does take into account the number of credits you took while abroad, and not having your study abroad courses on your NU transcript should not impact your registration time ticket.

If you're interested in enhancing your study abroad experience and making your application stand out more when applying for co-ops, consider signing up for NU's non-credit [Digital Badge in Global and Intercultural Communication](#).

Non-Traditional Coursework

Internships, service learning, and research are all experiential learning opportunities that may be available through your study abroad program. For credit-bearing non-traditional coursework, the course will be evaluated to reflect each student's unique experience. To have your non-traditional coursework evaluated, the faculty evaluator will need a course syllabus, placement information, a list of responsibilities, an academic assessment breakdown of all reflections, papers, presentations, and relevant materials, and any additional academic components included in the internship, service learning, or research placement.

To receive credit, non-traditional courses must be academically driven with course content and assessments outside of the internship, service learning, or research responsibilities (i.e. reflections and a final project or presentation). The approval of Northeastern credit for non-traditional coursework is not guaranteed, as each college or department has the discretion to deny credit for any course, including non-traditional coursework taken abroad.

Please contact your academic advisor and study abroad advisor before enrolling in a non-traditional coursework abroad to discuss your options.

If you have already collected all your materials for evaluation, please submit them in a single PDF to studyabroadcourses@northeastern.edu.

