

More Than Quarter Million Americans Studying Abroad



A record number of U.S. students are choosing to study abroad, says Open Doors 2009, published annually by the Institute of International Education last month with funding from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The number of Americans studying abroad increased by 8.5 percent to 262,416 in the 2007/08 academic year. This latest increase builds on decades of steady growth, with four times as many U.S. students participating in study abroad in 2007/08 than in 1987/88.

According to the report, the number of students going to nearly all of the top twenty-five destinations increased, with particularly strong rises seen in students going to less traditional destinations for study abroad. Notable increases among leading destinations were in the numbers students going to China, Ireland, Austria and India (up about 20 percent), as well as Costa Rica, Japan, Argentina and South Africa (up nearly 15 percent each). While this data reflects academic year 2007/08, prior to the economic downturn, it is likely that trends toward less expensive destinations and shorter stays will continue, reflecting the effects of the economy. Anecdotally, student interest in study abroad has remained high in the past year despite financial challenges that might keep some from participating, and campus leaders have expressed an interest in trying to make sure that international opportunities remain available. Many are placing an emphasis on sustaining financial assistance for study abroad.

"Today more than ever before, study abroad can help our students to understand our interconnected world and to participate productively in the global economy," said Judith A. McHale, Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. "The State Department strongly supports study abroad through such programs as the Fulbright Program, which is sending its largest number ever of U.S. students abroad this year, and the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program — which in two years has doubled the number of U.S. undergraduates with financial need whom we support for study abroad. I congratulate all the U.S. students who are taking advantage

of these and other opportunities to study abroad."

Allan E. Goodman, President and CEO of the Institute of International Education, noted that the experiences afforded through study abroad provide American students with the skills needed to live in today's increasingly inter-connected world. "More students are eager to study in newly popular study abroad destinations such as China, India, and the Middle East. The language and cultural skills they acquire along with their academic experience will have a profound effect on their lives and careers." According to Dr. Goodman, it is important for colleges and universities to make it possible for students from diverse backgrounds and in diverse fields to take advantage of study abroad opportunities.

While the four countries that are perennial leaders in hosting U.S. students — United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and France — are in Western Europe, Open Doors reports that fifteen of the top 25 destinations are outside of Western Europe and nineteen are countries where English is not the primary language. In 2007/08, students electing to study in Africa increased by 18 percent, those going to Asia increased by 17 percent, while those going to Latin America increased by 11 percent. This growth is fueled in part by new program opportunities, strategic partnerships between higher education institutions in the U.S. and abroad, and a range of fields and program durations that have expanded to accommodate the needs of an increasingly diverse study abroad population.

About 40 percent of students studying abroad do so through mid-length programs, while 56 percent of U.S. students choose short-term programs (including summer, January term and any program of two to eight weeks during the academic year). Short-term programs serve the largest number of Americans studying abroad, including community college students and others whose financial or academic needs preclude a longer stay; 68 percent of students at Associates Degree

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granting institutions who studied abroad did so for eight weeks or less. Mid-length programs (one semester, one quarter or two quarters) allow for deeper immersion into host cultures and increased opportunity for language acquisition. Just over four percent of study abroad students spend a full academic or calendar year abroad.

Europe continued to host the largest share of U.S. students (56 percent), while Latin America hosted 15 percent of all Americans studying abroad, Asia hosted 11 percent, Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific Islands) hosted five percent, as did Africa. The number of American students studying in the Middle East increased by 22 percent, though the region is host to a little more than one percent of the total number of students studying abroad. The report shows the number of U.S. students rising dramatically in such countries as Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, although the total numbers are still very low. Israel still hosts the largest number of students in the region by far, with a four percent increase over the previous year. About six percent of students study abroad in more than one destination during the same study abroad experience. While numbers headed to Europe rose from 138,871 to 147,676, this represents a smaller proportion of students than in prior years, with the European share of U.S. study abroad students declining over the past decade.

Of the top 25 leading destinations for U.S. study abroad, only five did not experience an increase in the number of American students.

New York University remained the leading sending institution, reporting that it gave academic credit for study abroad to 3,395 of its students, followed by Michigan State University (2,969), University of Minnesota/Twin Cities (2,521), University of Texas/Austin (2,342), University of California/Los Angeles (2,330), University of Wisconsin/Madison (2,216), University of Washington (2,124), Penn State/University Park (2,101), University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign (2,086), and University of Georgia (2,058). Open Doors 2009 reports that 53 U.S. campuses, primarily large research institutions, awarded academic credit for study abroad last year to more than 1,000 of their students.

While large institutions dominate in terms of absolute numbers of their students going abroad, many smaller institutions send a higher proportion of their students abroad. Open Doors 2009 data on study abroad participation rates show 23 institutions that reported sending more than 80 percent of their students abroad at some point during their undergraduate careers. These institutions are (in alphabetical order): Antioch College, Arcadia University, Austin College, Berea College, Carleton College, Centre College, DePauw University, Earlham College, Elon University, Goucher College, Hamline University, Hartwick College, Kalamazoo College, Lee University, Lewis and Clark College, Oberlin College, Pepperdine University, Saint Olaf College, Taylor University, Transylvania University, University of Dallas, Warren Wilson College, and Wofford College.



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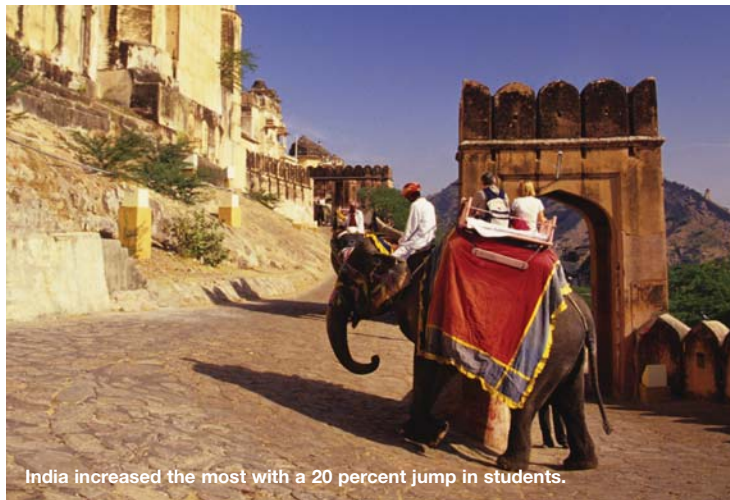
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The study abroad data in Open Doors 2009 reflect study conducted abroad in academic year 2007/08 (including summer 2008). Campus administrators responding to the Open Doors 2009 survey provide data on the number of study abroad students to whom they have awarded credit after completion of study abroad, so the data provided in academic year 2008/09 relates to study abroad in 2007/08 and is the most recent available. **X**



India increased the most with a 20 percent jump in students.

Increased U.S. Study Abroad Rates

Country Rank 2009	No. of Students	%-08	2008	No. of Students
1 U.K.	33,333	2	U.K.	32,705
2 Italy	30,670	10	Italy	27,831
3 Spain	25,212	5	Spain	24,005
4 France	17,336	.6	France	17,233
5 China	13,165	19	China	11,064
6 Australia	11,042	3	Australia	10,747
7 Mexico	9,928	5	Mexico	9,461
8 Germany	8,253	12	Germany	7,355
9 Ireland	6,881	19	Ireland	5,785
10 Costa Rica	6,098	13	Costa Rica	5,383
11 Japan	5,710	14	Japan	5,012
12 Argentina	4,109	14	Argentina	3,617
13 Greece	3,847	13	Greece	3,417
14 South Africa	3,700	15	South Africa	3,216
15 Czech Republic	3,417	9	Czech Republic	3,145
16 Austria	3,356	19	Chile	2,824
17 India	3,146	20	Ecuador	2,813
18 Ecuador	2,814	0	Austria	2,810
19 Chile	2,739	-3	New Zealand	2,718
20 Brazil	2,723	8	India	2,627

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