

EpiCenter and International Programs

Four years to forge experiences that last a lifetime

✓ **First Year: Exploration**

The first year on campus is the most important for students interested in off-campus study; it is the year that will lay the ground work for participating in experiential learning. Students need to discover the programs that are available, to work with their advisors to learn how these programs will compliment their disciplines, and to begin choosing courses at Messiah with an understanding of the types of courses they can take off-campus. Because of curricular obligations, it is **crucial** that students in some majors (Education, Engineering, Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics) start the exploration process as soon as they arrive on campus and in some cases, begin the application process soon after. All students will benefit from beginning their exploration as early as possible.

- *Let your advisor know that you are interested in studying off-campus.*
- *Visit the EpiCenter to explore programs and discover course that may meet general education or major requirements for your field of study. Students also can begin this search at www.messiah.edu/studyabroad*
- *Once you find a program in which you are interested, contact your academic advisor to see how this will fit into your curriculum. It is especially helpful to let your advisor know as early as possible so that he or she can help you choose courses that will not duplicate what you will be taking off-campus.*

✓ **Sophomore Year: Application**

For many students the second year is the time to start applying to study off-campus. Some programs are open only to juniors and seniors which makes the sophomore year the optimal time to begin this process. Consider applying up to a year in advance. Some programs are very competitive; early application may give you an advantage. One program (Daystar University) actually has a very early deadline — January 15 — for the following academic year.

- *Pick up applications and checklists from the EpiCenter.*
- *Start reading/learning about the country you will be visiting (check out the EpiCenter library) — read local newspapers and research information on the web. Check out the EpiCenter web page for helpful travel- and country-related information: www.messiah.edu/studyabroad. Talk with other students on campus who studied at your intended location; a resource list of students is available in the EpiCenter, or browse the facebook group “I Want to Study Abroad” to talk with returning students.*
- *Visit your advisor with course listings (EpiCenter has catalogs for many programs) and an off-campus study form to choose possible courses for your off-campus semester.*
- *Once you have been accepted, refer to your application checklist. Visit the EpiCenter for assistance with passports, International Student Identity Cards, off-campus study forms, study abroad contracts, and air arrangements for Central American Study and Service, Jerusalem University College, London Internship Program, Lithuania Christian College, Oxford Study Aboard Program, Scholars’ Semester in Oxford and Temple Rome.*

Note: If you are planning to study off-campus during your sophomore year, you will need to complete the application steps during your freshman year.

✓ **Junior Year: Realization**

You have completed your preparation; now is the time to make all of that hard work pay off. Enjoy your semester off-campus.

- *Once you arrive on site, continue to check your Messiah e-mail account. The EpiCenter will send you a weekly newsletter from campus. Also, the EpiCenter will send instructions as well as other important communication from campus offices, housing and parking as an example.*
- *Many students participate in internships during the spring semester of their senior year; a transition from academics to the world of work. Consider an internship your junior year and bring that hands-on experience back to campus. You will be surprised how much it will enhance classroom learning.*

✓ **Senior Year: Reflection**

You have had a wonderful experience off campus. Now is the time to share your enthusiasm with others in the college community. As you begin to process what you have learned, you will discover you have a lot to offer—not only to other students, but to the campus as a whole and to future employers.

- *Share your experience with other students:*
 1. *Speak in classes/participate in panel discussions*
 2. *Agree to serve on the alumni resource list*
 3. *Participate in classroom discussions drawing from your experiences off campus*
 4. *Befriend an international student—who better than you (if you have studied internationally) knows how it feels to be a stranger in a totally new culture*
 5. *Join the Messiah face book group, “I Want to Study Abroad” and share your experiences with students who are exploring their options.*
- *Share your insights about the program with the EpiCenter staff. Each semester the EpiCenter surveys students who studied off-campus the previous term. By completing this survey, you help Messiah College evaluate our programs and help us know how we can serve future students more effectively.*
- *Include your off-campus experience on your resume. You have experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom, experiences that translate into a stronger resume when you begin your career search.*

“...the words on the pages of my textbooks come to life and flood my reality with new meaning and greater depth.....Suddenly, the world has a face.”

- One Student's reflections on Studying Abroad