

**Masterstudiengang Internationale Wirtschaftsinformatik /  
International Information Systems (IIS)**

# **Study Abroad Guide**

A step-by-step guide towards studying abroad as part of the  
International Information Systems Master Program

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## Introduction

As one of the key pillars of the IIS program, the study abroad period provides IIS students with valuable insights into the culture and university system of another country. IIS students are required to spend at least one semester abroad, either in form of an exchange semester at a foreign university or by doing their Master thesis abroad. By offering different forms of going abroad, the IIS program offer students a great degree of flexibility regarding time, place and the type of study abroad period. The process of planning and organizing the study abroad period can be challenging due to the many options offered and the diversity of potential host countries. This document is therefore provided to serve as a guideline to help students manage this challenge.

The process as described in the following sections can be summarized as follows. It begins with detailed planning before applying, where a student finds a suitable and valid choice to go abroad. Once this has been finalized, the student prepares for the trip by ensuring travel and accommodation, clearing visa requirements, preparing for adequate finances and acquiring any other information which will be helpful for the stay. Once abroad, the student can then make the most of this visit and bring home a fascinating experience.

## Choice of Study Abroad

The primary choice students of the IIS program have, is to either do a semester abroad in the form of an exchange program or to do their Master thesis abroad. An exchange program with one of our partner Universities is the recommended option. Students visiting one of our partner Universities may benefit from reduced fees and may be eligible for scholarship programs.

Students may also study abroad as a 'Free Mover' by organizing the entire process of studying abroad themselves, at a University of their choice. Although going as a Free Mover provides considerable exposure and understanding of a country's educational system, students will receive minimal support and must be prepared to conduct their own research and organization for every step of the visit and study process.

To do a thesis abroad, students are required to have a supervisor from FAU WISO who offers a relevant research topic and a supervisor in the host institution. Students should set aside 3

to 6 months to do their thesis abroad and organize a certification of the study which will be required by the Examination Office (Prüfungsamt).

## Planning the Exchange Program

### *Applying to a University*

The recommended period for the study abroad is the third semester. Preparation for the study program should accordingly start during the first semester with the help of resources such as the website of the International Office, as the various processes involved are quite time consuming. It is also recommended to plan all courses of the program right from the beginning to complement the study abroad courses.

Students should prepare a list of partner Universities they will apply to, that offer courses matching the ones in the IIS program. Although many partner Universities have courses in English, it is preferable to have a good command over the language of the host country. Language also gives students further advantage with options in enrolling into non-English courses. Please have in mind that some foreign universities charge tuition fees and that the actual fees might even rise till the start of your studies abroad. Hence courses are one thing to have in mind, but money is also worth thinking over.

Applications to a partner university are made through the Chair managing the partnership. So students need to apply at the point of contact (POC) of the Chair who manages the university partnership. A list of partner universities and their points of contact can be found at the website of the International Office and also accessed by clicking [here](#). Make sure that you are aware of the deadlines and any university specific requirements by discussing with the appropriate POC. Certain aspects of the application and possible further requirements to apply for a certain partner university might differ. This depends on the chair managing the partnership and students should therefore seek information before handing in the final application. Please keep in mind that applications are usually submitted by December.

### *Credits Accreditation*

Transfer of credits from courses offered at the host University must be discussed with the respective IIS coordinators before departure. Students should prepare necessary learning agreements for courses substituting the mandatory courses of the IIS program and get them

accredited by the according responsible chair offering the mandatory course. Thus, one learning agreement for each chair should be prepared and signed by the respective chairs. The transcript of records from the University and the necessary learning agreements are needed for accepting credits from the study abroad into the IIS program. Please click [here](#) for detailed steps of the Accreditation process.

## Organizing the stay abroad

### *Planning for Accommodation*

Although accommodation in the host country is not guaranteed by partner universities, they usually provide details on finding accommodation and in some cases offer student dormitories. In other cases, accommodation needs to be organized independently. The following websites offer leads in finding short term accommodation:

- [www.justlanded.com](http://www.justlanded.com)
- [www.easywg.de](http://www.easywg.de)
- [www.expatriates.com](http://www.expatriates.com)
- [www.couchsurfing.org](http://www.couchsurfing.org)

### *Visa Requirements*

Visa requirements differ based on the nationality of the students and the host university country. Students may require a visa, a residence permit and/or a work permit. It is advisable to thoroughly go through the visa process in the appropriate embassy's website and to talk to other students who have already visited the host country to thoroughly understand the necessary requirements for studying in that country. Students are advised that applying for a student visa may be necessary and this step may be more bureaucratic and time consuming than getting a tourist visa.

Foreign students of the IIS program going to a Schengen country should enquire at the corresponding embassy with their German residence permit to check if they need a further visa.

## Going Abroad Expenses

Studying abroad is expected to be more expensive than studying in Nürnberg despite lower expenses in some countries. Although food and accommodation may be cheaper in certain countries, the University suggests that expenses will be at least 20% higher abroad due to various other factors such as tuition and travel fees. Additionally, the fees might change till the start of your studies abroad, so that you should have in mind that the expenses could increase or that you might have to visit another university short before the start of your semester abroad.

Although tuition fees usually are not additionally charged from Partner Universities, there may be very high tuition fees for some universities, especially in the US and Canada. In some cases such as ERASMUS, there is a reduction in tuition fees and a partial scholarship. The international office of our faculty can provide you with further up to date information about different funding possibilities like DAAD stipends and so forth.

## At the Host University

The study abroad program is expected to be a challenging time that can be successfully completed with proper planning and management. Students should complete all the necessary paperwork for the visit and complete pending academic tasks before leaving. Alumni strongly recommend not leaving pending tasks such as finishing reports and thesis for the semester abroad.

It is important to understand the foreign environment, meet a lot of new people and to get adjusted to a different schooling and living system when abroad. Participating in student clubs, volunteering in student activities and staying up to date with announcements are the best ways to fit in and understand cultural differences.

Furthermore, it would be really nice if you would write a small account of your trip and send us the feedback once you have completed your stay abroad. This will help us establish a database of dos and don'ts for various countries and universities that will be useful for future IIS students for years to come.

Remember, every country is different; so make sure you know the rules and have a great time!

## Key Contacts

I seek information regarding	Information source / Contact details
<b>... going abroad in general</b>	IIS Website <a href="http://www.iis.fau.de">www.iis.fau.de</a> # International Relations - <a href="http://ib.wiso.fau.de">ib.wiso.fau.de</a> Anke Wendelken – <a href="mailto:anke.wendelken@fau.de">anke.wendelken@fau.de</a>
<b>... learning agreements</b>	Pavlina Davcheva – <a href="mailto:pavlina.davcheva@fau.de">pavlina.davcheva@fau.de</a>
<b>... partner universities</b>	Chair Representative List- <a href="http://ib.wiso.fau.de/outgo/partneruniversitaeten">http://ib.wiso.fau.de/outgo/partneruniversitaeten</a>