

Study Abroad for Engineering Students: Frequently Asked Questions

Can I study abroad as an engineering student? Yes, you can!

But doesn't the School of Engineering and Applied Science discourage studying abroad? No, we certainly don't. The challenges in engineering, science, technology, infrastructure, commerce, and finance that Princeton engineering graduates will solve are all global in scope, and our students need to be prepared to cross boundaries comfortably to work in different cultures.

But my friends say I'll miss a lot while I'm away. Princeton has been around since 1746 and will still be here when you get back. Many of your friends will probably come to visit you when you're abroad and wish they took the opportunity themselves. With social media/technology, you certainly won't be out of touch.

Where have Princeton engineering students studied abroad? They have gone to many different countries, including England, Ireland, Denmark, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Korea, China, Argentina, Italy, Chile, and Ghana.

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Do Princeton engineering students study abroad for a semester or a year? In most cases, they spend a semester abroad, but in some instances, a full year makes more sense. For example, students who participate in the Princeton-Oxford Engineering Exchange spend a full academic year abroad due to the structure of the Oxford program of instruction.

When is the best time to study abroad? It depends on the structure of the program of study in your department at Princeton. In many cases, the spring term of junior year works best, but in some departments there is a course that

is difficult to replace with a course taken elsewhere, so students in those departments may study abroad in the fall of junior year. Spring of sophomore year may also be possible, depending on your departmental requirements.

How do I decide where to study? Where would you like to go? Is there a country or continent that has always intrigued you? Do you want a real Gothic Experience? The advisers in the Office of International Programs can help you reflect on your personal and academic goals and choose the best program for you.

Isn't it difficult to find engineering courses abroad that match to Princeton courses? With a little work, it is usually possible to find courses that are comparable in content and rigor to those at Princeton. Most of the foreign institutions where Princeton students study also have distinguished traditions of engineering education.

What about the language barrier? Can I really study abroad in a language other than English? The minimum Princeton threshold for studying abroad in a different language is having mastered it at the equivalent of 107/108 courses, but for working in technical subjects, you should be more proficient than that. That being said, there are many countries where English is the standard language of instruction, and Princeton even offers some programs specifically designed for Engineering students where there is no language requirement at all.

How do I start planning for study abroad? Once you are confident about your choice of major in the spring of your first year, you can start planning in earnest. Think about where you want to go. Then schedule a short meeting with Dean Bogucki for an initial conversation, followed by a meeting with an adviser in the Office of International Programs to discuss particular schools and programs. Once you have done your research on the schools and their programs of instruction and met with Dean Bogucki and an adviser in the Office of International Programs, you should complete your study abroad program application(s) by the stated deadline(s). You'll then fill out the Princeton Study Abroad Approval Form and take it and the information about your proposed courses to your departmental representative.

What if the engineering courses offered by the foreign school don't match Princeton courses exactly? Sometimes other schools divide subjects differently from Princeton, and it might be necessary to use more than one course abroad to fulfill a single Princeton requirement. You will discuss these matters with your departmental representative.

Can I take an engineering course abroad that does not have a matching course at Princeton? In many cases, yes. Usually it can be counted as a technical elective. For example, a foreign school may have a course in coastal engineering that we do not offer here.

Can I receive humanities and social science distribution credit for non-engineering courses taken abroad? In many cases, yes, with approval from the appropriate departmental representative at Princeton.

Can I also fulfill requirements for certificate programs abroad? In many cases, yes, with the approval from the certificate program director.

Do my grades from the foreign university transfer to Princeton and get counted in my GPA? You have to pass the courses you take abroad with the equivalent of a D or better for them to get Princeton credit, but the actual grade does not carry over to your Princeton transcript. Instead, the grade is recorded as a "T" for transfer credit along with the title of the course. Princeton's GPA calculation, which is not an official measure of academic standing, does not include grades earned abroad. You will receive documentation from the overseas program that you can provide to graduate schools as a record of your studies there.

What is the minimum grade required to transfer back credit to Princeton? In most cases, you must earn the equivalent of a D or better in order to receive credit for a course abroad. However, if a course is counting for departmental credit, you should double-check with your department to see if they have a higher grade requirement for credit transfer.

What about ABET accreditation? Students in ABET-accredited programs have not had a problem studying abroad. A core outcome for ABET accreditation is: "an ability to ... make informed judgments, which must consider the impact of engineering solutions in **global**, economic, environmental, and societal contexts." Studying abroad is certainly consistent with this outcome. ABET and its corresponding organizations in many countries have signed the Washington Accord, which recognizes the equivalency of accredited programs. See <http://www.ieagreements.org/accords/washington/>. Even if where you are studying is not part of the Washington Accord, there has never been an issue with courses approved by Princeton as substantially equivalent to our own courses being accepted by ABET.

Please go away!