

Study Abroad for Integrative Biology Majors

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The Integrative Biology (IB) department believes that its students can benefit greatly from the life-changing experience of studying abroad. Fitting a semester abroad into an education in the sciences can be daunting, but with careful planning, it can be done! The study abroad experience, whether focused on studies in the sciences or in another discipline, allows students the amazing opportunity to become adaptable, independent and well-rounded global citizens in a world of rapidly increasing globalization.



Why study abroad?

Integrative Biology is a broad and highly interdisciplinary science major, drawing on aspects of ecology, anthropology, molecular biology, psychology and more. This integrated approach to the sciences is highly conducive to the study abroad experience, as studying abroad allows students to explore new ways of looking at the natural world while expanding their cultural horizons and learning to think and act on a global level. Further benefits include:

- Developing self-confidence and independence
- Participating in a different educational system and gaining new cultural perspectives
- Studying fascinating topics not covered by UC Berkeley courses
- Exploring new & varied areas of study
- Increasing proficiency in another language
- Preparing for a career in an internationally competitive world
- Enhancing resumes and/or applications for graduate school



When can I study abroad?

While it is possible for Integrative Biology majors to go abroad at almost any point in their academic careers, the particular semester or year that you study abroad depends on what courses you plan to take. Students interested in fulfilling major preparation and general education requirements can participate as early as their sophomore year. Students wishing to fulfill upper-division major requirements should go abroad after having taken at least a couple of courses in the major here at Berkeley.

Please note that BSA programs for undeclared students are extremely limited; we highly recommend waiting until you are declared in the IB major in order to get the most out of your study abroad experience.

Transfer students are eligible to participate their second semester at UCB, usually the spring of their junior year. Studying abroad as a transfer student in the sciences requires a lot of planning, so it is never too early to ask the IB advisors about possible strategies that can allow you to participate in BSA.

“Exploring Swedish nature, historical sites and cities was a highlight of my experience, as was immersing myself in student life in Lund and learning about Swedish culture and traditions... And though my time there is over, I'd like to think my life as a global citizen is just beginning.”

Lorianne Burns

Plan ahead!

Applications typically are due six months to a year prior to the program's start date and some programs have academic or linguistic prerequisites that must be satisfied in advance. Please check the BSA website for guidance on “how to apply”:
studyabroad.berkeley.edu/how-to-apply

Cost:

Study on BSA can be comparable to the cost of study at UC. In some cases, it is less. BSA participants pay UC fees and continue to receive UC financial aid while abroad. Furthermore, BSA students are eligible for special grants and scholarships from UC, the host country, and other sources.



Where can I study abroad?

The Integrative Biology department strongly encourages students who are interested in study abroad to look at a broad range of options rather than just focusing on studying the sciences. That being said, IB students who would like to complete a portion of their major abroad have a wide variety of options. Many of BSA's partner universities have specific IB and Biology departments/programs or offer relevant courses through other departments.

Examples:

- The quarter-long Tropical Biology and Conservation Program at the Monteverde Institute in Costa Rica provides UC students hands-on field experience in biology, conservation, zoology, and botany.
- Study marine biology or environmental and ecological studies at University of Queensland while exploring Australia's varied landscape and its Great Barrier Reef, the largest coral reef in the world.



What classes can I take?

Whatever you want! No course is guaranteed to count towards the major (you must get approval after you return), so it is important to take courses that you will enjoy, whether they contribute to your major or not. If you choose to take biology courses and they are approved, you may count up to two courses toward the major.

Some examples of courses IB students may enjoy:

- Tropical Biology & Conservation at the Monteverde Institute, Monteverde, Costa Rica
- Genetics at University of Chile
- Marine Biology at Australian National University
- Plant Diversity at University of Cape Town
- Animal Physiology at Chinese University of Hong Kong

Students wanting to fulfill major requirements abroad should consult closely with the Integrative Biology advisors. You should check in early for planning, keep in touch once the study abroad schedule has been finalized, and, if requesting course credit in the major, plan a visit to the advising office promptly upon return to begin the course approval process. (Please also note that the procedure for obtaining an advisor code is different for students studying abroad. Please see the IB major advisors for details!)

Course credit: Students will earn UC credit for BSA courses they complete abroad. However, application of credit to major requirements is subject to the discretion of the department. To search for program and course options, go to the BSA website: studyabroad.berkeley.edu/programs and follow the links to courses offered through UCEAP and Berkeley Abroad.

What happens when I return?

Upon returning to Berkeley, students should meet with an Undergraduate Major Advisor in IB, and then with a Faculty Advisor, to request approval for equivalent coursework in the major. (Note: If you plan to request approval for a general education course, you should meet with an advisor in the L&S Evaluation Unit, not your major advisor.)

Keep In Mind:

- Even before you return, stay in touch with the Undergraduate Major Advisor regarding course selection.
- Bring back course materials such as syllabi, reading lists and exams, as these will help when petitioning for major or general education credit.
- Final approval granted only when grades and units are posted to UC Berkeley transcript (check Bearfacts).

I'm interested! What are the next steps?

Integrative Biology students interested in study abroad through BSA should first research program options on the BSA website studyabroad.berkeley.edu, then meet with the Integrative Biology advisors to discuss departmental regulations and the academic planning process. Application information and BSA advising are available at the Berkeley Study Abroad office, 160 Stephens Hall