

# Study Abroad for Middle Eastern Studies Majors

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*The Middle Eastern Studies major strongly encourages its students to add an international dimension to their education by participating in Berkeley Study Abroad (BSA). MES students attend study abroad programs at universities around the world and take classes that allow them to improve their language skills and gain comparative perspectives on a wide variety of Middle Eastern issues. With proper academic planning, students can have the experience of a lifetime while completing their degrees on schedule.*



## Why study abroad?

Study Abroad for MES majors provides many benefits. Because this major is interdisciplinary, students can tailor their Study Abroad curriculum to best fit their interests and take advantage of unique academic and experiential opportunities by taking courses of interest not readily available on the Berkeley campus.

Study Abroad will help you develop practical life experiences by:

- developing your self-confidence and independence.
- increasing your proficiency in another language.
- improving your critical thinking and problem solving skills
- preparing you for graduate school or a career in an internationally competitive world.

*“ Israel is one of the most diverse places in the world. Everyone has a unique dress, a unique way of life. In Israel, you see that there is so much more than conflict. There is also a genuine kindness that exists. For a Middle Eastern Studies student, living in this mix of Middle Eastern cultures is priceless. Only by living in these cultures can you really begin to understand them. I am proud to call Israel a home.”*

-Rebecca Leff



## When can I study abroad?

While it is possible for MES students to go abroad at many points in their academic careers, the particular semester or year that you study abroad depends on what courses you plan to take. Students interested in participating in language programs or taking college breadth requirements can participate as early as sophomore year. Students aiming to fulfill upper-division major requirements should generally go abroad in their junior year. MES students are generally not able to go abroad during their senior year.

To determine the best time period for you to study abroad, consult with a MES advisor at the IAS office in 101 Stephens Hall.

*“ The best way to understand the world is to go see as much of it as you can. There is no better way to do that than Study Abroad.”*

*Maximilian Auffhammer, Professor & Director,  
International & Area Studies Academic Program*

## 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](http://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?

MES students planning to complete a portion of their major abroad have many options. The type of program you choose will depend on language proficiency, academic goals, and time constraints.

MES students have previously studied abroad at a wide variety of universities around the world, including but not limited to

- Diplomacy and Policy Studies, Amman, Jordan
- Hebrew University, Israel
- Middle East Technical University, Turkey
- Bilkent University, Turkey
- Bogazici University, Turkey



## What classes can I take?

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the MES major, there are no pre-approved study abroad programs or classes. Students wanting to fulfill major requirements abroad should bring program information and course descriptions to a MES advisor before departure. We will review it and advise you on your selection. However, you will not receive a guarantee in advance that the courses will count for your major.

Remember: students may fulfill up to 3 upperdivision requirements with courses taken from outside the UC Berkeley College of Letters and Science. This includes courses taken abroad as well as courses taken at UC Berkeley in departments or schools that are not within L&S, such as the Goldman School of Public Policy or the Haas School of Business. Any courses taken to fulfill the MES language requirement are not included in the 3-course limit.

In order to fulfill an upper division Middle Eastern Studies major requirement, courses taken abroad must:

- transfer as upper division
- be taken for a letter grade
- transfer as at least 3 UC Berkeley semester units
- be evaluated and approved upon your return from abroad by LAS

### 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](https://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/programs) and follow the links to courses offered through UCEAP and Berkeley Abroad.

### What happens when I return?

Have your courses reviewed by bringing course materials, such as syllabi, reading lists and exams, and the IAS Study Abroad Course Approval Form to a MES advisor during drop-in advising hours.

The form you will need to submit to a MES advisor to have your courses reviewed as well as a complete description of the approval process is [here](#).

### I'm interested! What are the next steps?

MES students interested in study abroad through BSA should first research program options on the BSA website ([studyabroad.berkeley.edu](https://studyabroad.berkeley.edu)), then meet with a LAS advisor during drop-in advising hours 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.