

MACALESTER COLLEGE

Off–Campus Study Proposal

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUIRED STUDENT ESSAYS

Depending on the type of program you have selected, you are required to write one or more essays describing your program and its relation to your educational goals, as listed in further detail below and on the next page. Please review the list of supplemental essays carefully to ensure that you complete all essays required of you.

Since a poorly written essay is one of the most common reasons for the Study Away Review Committee to reject an applicant, please read the instructions carefully, keep within the format and length restrictions, and be sure to address all issues pertinent to your program and educational goals in a concrete manner. The Committee wishes to remind students that even those who are required by their majors to study off-campus, are not required to do so in any specific semester; so please take your essays seriously.

All essays must be submitted in hard copy on standard sheets of 8-1/2 by 11 inch paper. Margins must be no less than 1" at the top, bottom and sides, and the typeface no smaller than Times 12-point or Times Roman 12-point. All essays must be double-spaced and each individual essay must be no more than two pages in length.

A) EDUCATIONAL GOALS ESSAY: Required for all Proposals

Please explain the academic reasons why you have selected your proposed program. This essay should address in a very focused manner the specific courses you will study while off-campus and how they relate to your degree program and (educational) life goals. It should make clear the following three things: 1) how the coursework supports and extends your Macalester academic program, particularly your major; 2) how the program fits into your broader intellectual interests; and 3) how your college level studies so far have prepared you for this specific program. A very brief introductory paragraph which addresses the academic quality or specialties of your program or host university, followed by a paragraph for each course which explains its relationship to your educational goals, is the most common method of accomplishing these objectives within the two-page limit.

B) YEAR-LONG STUDY ESSAY: Required for all programs longer than a semester

On a separate piece of paper, please describe the factors that have drawn you to this program in particular, which cannot be achieved through a semester-long program of similar quality. Since study away for a full academic year is generally approved only for exemplary students attempting exemplary things, this essay should not rehash the coursework listed above nor the desirability or more course options over a longer time period (which is a given of full-year programs), or even the widely-held belief of the benefits of longer language immersion; but should instead show extremely clear evidence of these three points:

1. That this proposed plan of study involves a world class institution &/or educational opportunity, widely recognized for its particular strengths in the areas of your major or majors; &
2. The ways in which this specific full year program is a particularly appropriate extension of your personal education trajectory thus far (your combination of majors & minors) and your broader curricular, co-curricular and educational life goals; &
3. The ways in which you are highly prepared academically, culturally, linguistically, and (if applicable) vocationally & socially for the program in question.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUIRED ESSAYS, PART TWO

C) INDEPENDENT STUDY OR DIRECTED RESEARCH ESSAY: Required for programs with independent study or directed research course(s).

On a separate piece of paper, please answer the following four sub-questions in focused responses of one to three paragraphs each. The combined length of these four short essays should equal no more than two double-spaced pages. For suggestions about feasible projects and/or methodology, you may first wish to familiarize yourself with the syllabi of the proposed field-based program, or the teaching specialties of the university faculty, by consulting their websites.

1. What is the theme or topic question of your proposed independent research project and how is it an outgrowth of both the program theme and your own studies to date? Have you ascertained either through published program materials and/or discussion with program staff that such a project is feasible within the time frame available and is culturally sensitive?
2. What methodological approach or approaches (such as participant observation, oral history, scientific sampling, etc.) do you intend to employ to research your proposed topic? Have you had experience with this and/or will the program provide you with methodological training?
3. To what sort of resources and expertise will you need access in order to answer the topic question you have described above and thus complete your project? Is your proposed project appropriate to the level of equipment or technology you will have available at your host institution or field site? How will you address any language barriers in the host society or in minority-language populations you hope to use as informants?
4. How does this study project relate to your academic program, you major(s) and/or your co-curricular and career goals?

D) INTERNSHIP ESSAY: **Required for programs with a for-credit internship or service-learning course.**

On a separate piece of paper, please answer both of the following sub-questions in short responses of about two to four paragraphs each. The combined length of these two short essays should equal no more than two double-spaced pages. For suggestions about feasible internship placements, you may wish to review a list of previous placements your program has offered and/or to discuss your work experience and interests with a program representative prior to completing this essay.

1. What is the area of employment (business, arts, non-profit, government, education, etc.) in which you seek an internship? What sort of placement would be your ideal internship match? Have you ascertained either through published program materials and/or discussion with program staff that this type of internship placement is regularly offered to undergraduate students?
2. How is the proposed internship an outgrowth of your current educational trajectory and you work experience to date? What are your learning goals for the internship? How will it relate to and inter-relate your academic program and career goals?

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUIRED ESSAYS, PART THREE

E) NON-LISTED PROGRAM ESSAY: Required for all programs NOT listed on Macalester recommended programs list.

On a separate piece of paper, please describe the educational factors that have drawn you to this program in particular, which cannot be achieved through a program currently on Macalester's recommended list. (Please review <http://www.macalester.edu/internationalcenter/planning.html> for list and for information on which programs are suited to particular majors, if you have not already done so.) The combined length of your answers to the following points should be not less than one double-spaced page, nor more than two double-spaced pages.

Since study away on a non-listed program means that the program has probably NOT undergone full review by Macalester faculty of staff for scholarly and teaching excellence, fit with a liberal arts curriculum, and competent student support staff, you will want to have carefully examined the program materials and faculty credentials with these things in mind. Your program essay should draw on this information, where applicable, in order to show extremely clear evidence of the three points enumerated below.

1. Does this proposed plan of study involve a world class institution &/or educational opportunity, widely recognized for its particular strengths in the areas of your major or majors? (Explain)
2. In what ways is this specific program a particularly appropriate extension of your personal educational trajectory thus far (your combination of majors & minors) and your broader curricular, co-curricular life goals?
3. In what substantial academic ways does the proposed program differ from similar programs on the recommended list and what educational benefits does it offer you that these programs don't?