

Valuing Study Abroad: The Global Mandate for Higher Education

An IIE Briefing Paper Based on Remarks at the
British Academy International Conference by:

Scott J. Freidheim

Member, Board of Trustees, Institute of International Education
Chief Executive Officer, Europe, Investcorp International



IIE Information Resources

www.iie.org	Institute of International Education Website
www.iie.org/iienetwork	Resources for IIE Members
www.iie.org/opendoors	Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange
www.iie.org/atlas	Data on Global Student Mobility
www.iiebooks.org	IIE's Online Bookstore
www.iiepassport.org	Directory of Study Abroad Programs
www.StudyAbroadFunding.org	Study Abroad Funding for U.S. Students
www.FundingUSstudy.org	Funding for United States Study

© Copyright 2012 by the Institute of International Education

IIE Editorial Team

Daniel Obst, Executive Editor

Luke Epplin, Managing Editor

Arturo Romero-Pereda, Designer

Remarks delivered by Scott J. Freidheim, Chief Executive Officer, Europe for Investcorp International Ltd. and Member, Board of Trustees, Institute of International Education. Investcorp invests funds on behalf of institutional and private Middle Eastern investors who buy assets and companies mainly across Europe, the United States, and the MENA region. Before joining Investcorp in 2011, Freidheim was Executive Vice President, Sears Holdings Corporation. He was President of Kenmore, Craftsman & Diehard and served on the Holdings Company Business Unit Board. Previously, Freidheim worked at Lehman Brothers for more than 17 years, most recently as Chief Administrative Officer and Executive Vice President, with oversight of the company's corporate division. Over the years, he held officer positions in Lehman's investment banking, private equity, and corporate divisions.

Freidheim is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council and Forum of Young Global Leaders, a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, a member of the Executive Advisory Board of Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, a member of Young Presidents' Organization, and a member of the Economic Club of New York. He is also actively involved with the Institute of International Education, which administers the Fulbright scholarship program on behalf of the U.S. Department of State, where he is a member of the Board of Trustees and the Scholar Rescue Fund Advisory Committee. Freidheim holds a BA in economics from Northwestern University and an MBA from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. He is based in the London office of Investcorp International, and has lived and studied in Brazil, France, and the United States.

Report prepared by Sharon S. Witherell, Director of Public Affairs, Institute of International Education. Witherell is responsible for media and public outreach in support of IIE's programs and policies around the world, including the release of the annual *Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange*, and producing policy briefing materials and publications such as the IIE Global News. She holds a BA in political science from Amherst College and studied abroad at the University of Bath in the UK.

Valuing Study Abroad: The Global Mandate for Higher Education

**Remarks to the British Academy
International Conference, March 27, 2012
London, United Kingdom**

Scott J. Freidheim

Member, Board of Trustees, Institute of International Education

Chief Executive Officer, Europe, Investcorp International

A Briefing Paper from IIE's Center for Academic Mobility Research

INTRODUCTION

Scott Freidheim spoke at the British Academy's International Conference in London in March 2012, presenting U.S. perspectives on study abroad as part of an international panel. At the conference, the British Academy and the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) released a joint position statement, *Valuing the Year Abroad*, that advocated support for funding a third year abroad for British undergraduate students and that drew on case studies from a survey they conducted among study abroad alumni. With representatives from the United States, China, and Germany, the international panel was invited to discuss British government and higher education policy on study abroad, and other countries' policies and best practices in study abroad.

Speaking to an assembled group of more than 100 governmental and NGO experts and university representatives, Freidheim shared his point of view as someone who has extensive experience studying and working internationally. He discussed the U.S. perspective on study abroad, including data and trends from the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, which shows that fewer than two percent of U.S. students study abroad each year, and the majority of these do so for short-term programs rather than for a year or semester abroad. He also commented on certain obstacles and opportunities for encouraging more students to study abroad.

This briefing paper includes Freidheim's remarks and excerpts of the British Academy and UCML position statement, as well as additional data on the landscape of study abroad.

The British Academy, the UK's national body that champions and supports excellence in the humanities and social sciences, and the UCML called on the British government to seek ways to minimize the financial disincentives involved in an extra year of study, specifically by addressing mounting concerns that recent increases in tuition fees will cause fewer UK students to take degree courses involving a year abroad. They also called on British government and universities to recognize the strategic importance of the year abroad; in particular, the year abroad can deliver both competitive employability advantages for the students themselves and wider long-term benefits for the UK economy as a whole.

Speakers at the conference included the UK government spokesman for Higher Education in the Lords, the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages, the director of UniversitiesUK, the head of the Higher Education Funding Council for England, and the CEO of the British Council.

This briefing paper was produced through IIE's Center for Academic Mobility Research. This Center brings together the Institute's in-house research expertise with leading minds from around the world to conduct and disseminate timely and relevant research and policy analysis in the field of international student and faculty mobility. The Center provides applied research and program evaluation services to domestic and international governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, corporations, and foundations. To learn more about the center, please visit: www.iie.org/mobility. For more information about IIE's publications and briefing papers, please visit www.iie.org/publications.

Sharon S. Witherell
Director, Public Affairs
Institute of International Education

FOREWORD

The Institute of International Education is privileged to have Scott Freidheim as a Member of our Board of Trustees, and we are grateful to him for representing IIE at the British Academy's International Conference. His insight as a truly global businessman brings a valuable point of view to the discussion of the value of study abroad, and to the continuing conversation on how to make sure that international is a part of everyone's education.

We are pleased to see public and private sector leaders and policy-makers in the United Kingdom joining with educators in this effort to champion policies that enable students to study abroad. Involvement on many different levels will be required to make these opportunities accessible to all students across demographic categories, areas of interest, and fields of study.

Institutions of higher education need foreign policies. Their leaders need to formulate institution-wide policies to assess their current engagement with the world and how international education fits into their future strategic agendas. Therefore, we welcome the close examination of the value of study abroad that the survey of UK participants and alumni represents, and the intense discussion that has taken place around the launch of the joint position statement by the British Academy and University Council of Modern Languages.

Study abroad benefits institutions and their students by providing experiences that are sustained and meaningful to the students both personally and professionally throughout their lifetimes. In the United States, studies such as the Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) have reported that participation in study abroad has a measurable impact on student learning outcomes. This study showed that students who study abroad have improved academic performance upon returning to their home campus, higher graduation rates, and improved knowledge of cultural practices and contexts compared to students in control groups. But what is needed is a more comprehensive look at the impact study abroad has on lives and careers after graduation.

We welcome the British Academy and UCML joint position statement's efforts to highlight concrete case studies on the value of study abroad and to make recommendations to universities, students, government, and employers. We look forward to seeing continued engagement by all parties in working to increase participation in study abroad.

Allan E. Goodman
President & CEO
Institute of International Education

VALUING STUDY ABROAD: THE GLOBAL MANDATE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

**Remarks to the British Academy
International Conference, March 27, 2012
London, United Kingdom**

Delivered by Scott Freidheim

While my day job is as a member of Investcorp, I am here primarily in my capacity as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of International Education. It is my privilege to be with you today to represent IIE and its CEO, Allan Goodman.

At the Institute, we believe that academic exchange—in both directions—strengthens higher education and research activities and fosters cross-border collaboration on shared global problems, whether those be fighting disease or poverty or protecting the environment. In a world defined largely by fragmented political bodies, academic exchange has become an incredibly important part of building relationships between people and countries.

The Institute works with universities around the world to help them provide opportunities for students to study outside of their own countries, and to better serve the international students they host on their campuses. IIE staff have worked with many of you on these endeavors, and the Institute has collaborations with the British Council, Universities UK, the UK Fulbright Commission, and other friends in Britain and Europe on a number of research and policy projects.

I have been asked to present a brief overview of the U.S. perspective on study abroad. I come to this assignment with a slightly different, minority perspective; I am a product of it. I grew up and studied in Brazil, France, and the United States. For nearly two decades, I worked for a global institutional investment bank that engaged in 40 countries around the world. Today, I serve at Investcorp International. I am the only American in our London office. Our firm has 350 people from over 60 countries: we are truly international. Our clients are primarily institutional and private investors based in the Gulf, and we deliver to them investing solutions in alternative assets primarily across Europe and the United States.

From my point of view, I have seen firsthand not only the value but also the prerequisite of having the attributes which are developed and fostered through study abroad—namely: global mindset, collaboration, adaptability, flexibility, and learning and cultural agility. These are of paramount importance to achieving success in the international business arena and are many of the very attributes we look for when hiring talent. My Investcorp experience has made me appreciate even more the value of these attributes. So, I welcome this opportunity to discuss the U.S. perspective on study abroad.

The British Academy has asked that I cover the following topics in painting a picture of study abroad in the United States:

- Structure and definition of study abroad in U.S.;
- Where students go and for how long;
- Role of U.S. government in funding; and
- Campus leadership.

U.S. Higher Education: Decentralized, but Growing Appreciation for Study Abroad

As many of you who have had occasion to work with U.S. higher education have come to know, its distinguishing characteristic is its decentralization. There are close to 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States, ranging from large public universities (run generally by the states, not the central government) to small private liberal arts colleges, with vibrant and growing community colleges and minority-serving institutions. Their policies toward internationalization are set by a variety of presidents, chancellors, deans, and governing bodies that include state governments.

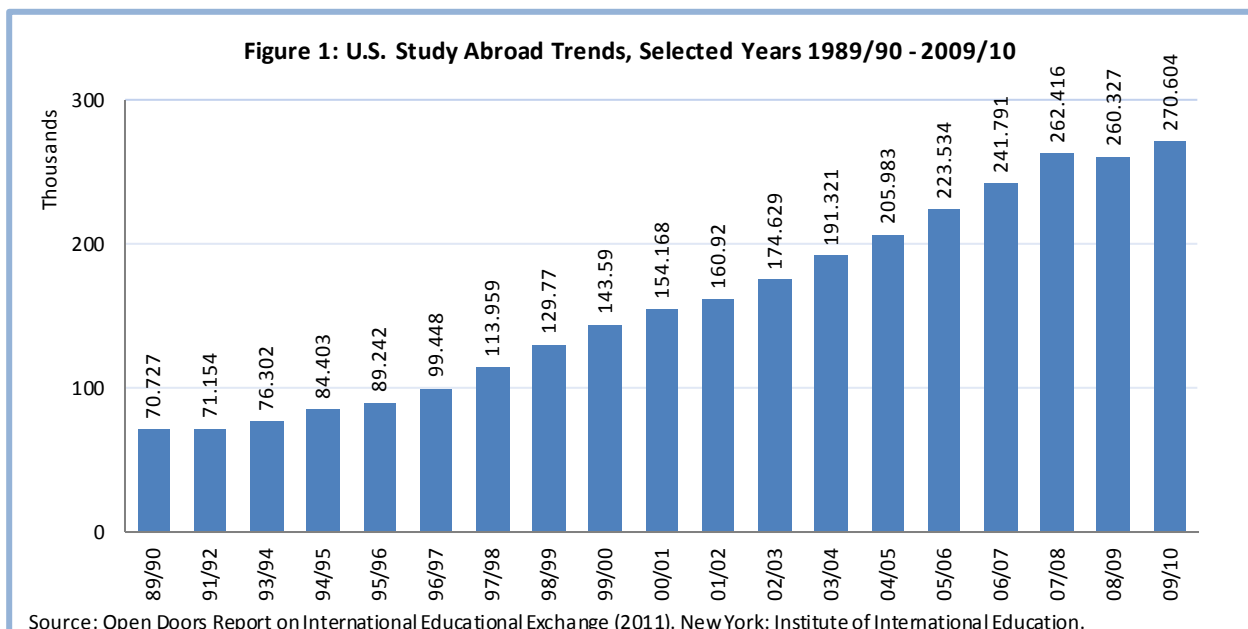
The U.S. Department of Education plays a role in funding and oversight for higher education, and the U.S. Department of State offers scholarship programs and resources to promote citizen-to-citizen diplomacy and the exchange of cultures and ideas. But neither agency “regulates” study abroad policy.

So what I cannot give you is any kind of monolithic “United States view” of study abroad.

What I can say is that students and campuses are becoming increasingly innovative and entrepreneurial in finding ways to make it possible for more students to go abroad. Short-term study abroad is growing particularly rapidly, out of a desire to enable larger numbers of students to have some kind of international experience and to diversify the fields and ethnicity and financial abilities of the students who do so, despite the significant increases in fees in many public colleges in recent years.

The good news is that study abroad by students enrolled in U.S. higher education has more than tripled over the past two decades, from fewer than 100,000 students per year in the 1980s to nearly 300,000 in the most recent year. The *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* that IIE produces annually with support from the Department of State shows that there has been a steady rise in study abroad numbers each year since the data has been tracked, with the exception of 2008/09, when the global financial crisis caused a dip.

There is growing recognition among educators and policy-makers that more U.S. students need to study abroad to be prepared for leadership roles in the global economy and an increasingly interconnected world. The experiences afforded through study abroad help equip students with the skills they need for



21st century careers and for global citizenship. The opportunity for more young Americans to study abroad is a goal shared by the President, the Secretary of State, and leaders in Congress, as well as by leaders in industry and academia. In fact, the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, recently made an appeal to students on YouTube, urging them to consider studying abroad.

Where study abroad used to be viewed as a luxury, there is now more consensus that increasing global competence among U.S. citizens will help the United States maintain economic competitiveness. It will also increase public engagement with issues of international concern—something that is of particular concern to me. Study abroad is increasingly viewed as an integral part of the academic experience.

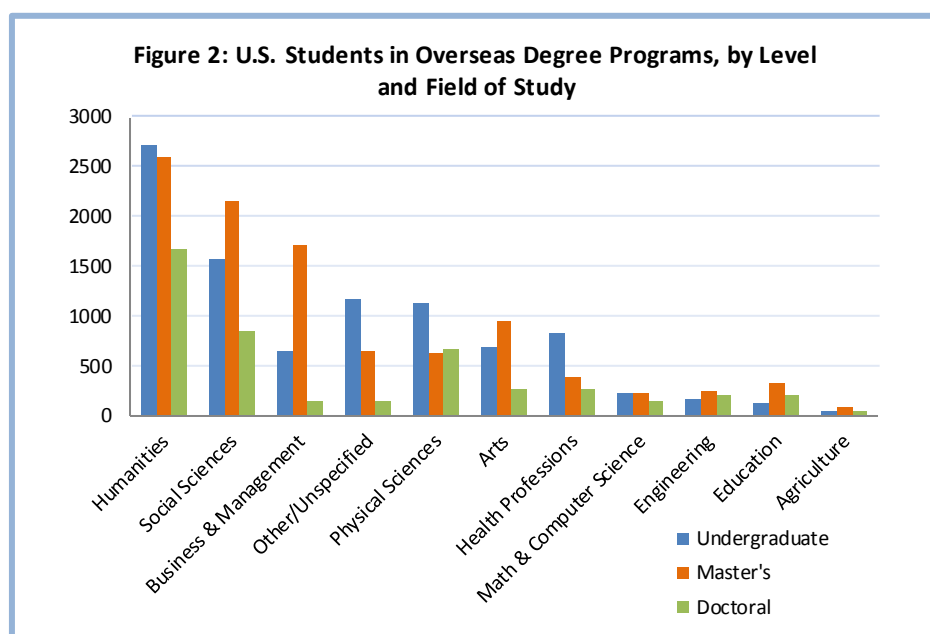
There is also a strong recognition that we must do more to make it possible for more students to participate. Total U.S. higher education enrollment has also been expanding, yet the percentage of the total population that studies abroad remains far too low. With some 20 million students in all of U.S. higher education, less than two percent of the total student population is studying abroad in any given year. When you look at only those in four-year undergraduate programs, the percentage is higher, at slightly under 15 percent who study abroad before graduating. But the potential is there: 24 colleges report that 70 percent or more of their students participate in study abroad during their undergraduate career.

How We Define Study Abroad

When we look at international students on U.S. campuses, we are primarily talking about students who come to the United States for a full degree, at the undergraduate or graduate level. In the most recent *Open Doors* report, there were more than 700,000 international students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities.

But when we talk about study abroad, and specifically the *Open Doors* data, we are referring to students who take some time away from studying at a U.S. college or university to gain international experience. This can range anywhere from a few weeks to an academic year, and can include research or internships as well as course work, as long as they receive credit from their U.S. institution when they return. In the most recent year, data showed that the total number of students studying abroad was a little more than 270,000.

This year, for the first time, IIE also conducted a different type of research through its Project Atlas, compiling data from the host countries to show how many U.S. students they had enrolled for full degrees in their nations' colleges and universities. The Institute's new report on full degrees overseas shows that about 43,000 students were pursuing full



Source: U.S. Students in Overseas Degree Programs (2012). New York: Institute of Int. Education.

degrees abroad. More than half of these were enrolled in graduate programs, including the increasingly popular one-year master's degree. These numbers are important to consider. But they are not included in the *Open Doors* figures that I am citing.

There are also anecdotal reports of more students going abroad for internships, private language study, volunteer work, and other kinds of learning vacations for which they do not receive academic credit, and therefore are not included in the study abroad data.

The U.S. Model of Study Abroad

When IIE was founded in 1919, study abroad was likely to mean Americans setting off on a steamship to pursue a degree at Oxford or Cambridge. Then, in the 1920s, IIE worked with a few U.S. institutions, notably the University of Delaware, to create a new concept called Junior Year Abroad, through which students could take a year away from their U.S. colleges to study overseas for a year. This was the dominant model for several decades, during which the students who participated were primarily young men and women—more often women—of financial means, who could afford to pay their own way and would study mainly in arts and literature and the humanities, usually in a European capital.

As the higher education population became more diverse, and business began to be more international, more students sought opportunities to gain overseas experience, and more colleges began to offer study abroad experiences for a broader range of their students.

This led to a proliferation of study abroad programs for U.S. students, with universities and for-profit providers offering models of every type, duration, and price point. While many campuses conduct their own faculty-led study tours and semester- or year-long programs, and even run academic centers or whole campuses abroad, students can also apply directly to outside programs. IIE's directory of study abroad programs, *IIE Passport*, now includes more than 9,000 different programs. www.iiepassport.org is searchable by destination, field of study, language of instruction, duration, and other criteria. Colleges and other funders have also begun to offer more grants and scholarships for study abroad, and IIE also publishes a directory of these at www.StudyAbroadFunding.org.

The growth of short-term and more flexible, lower-cost programs and the development of scholarships for study abroad mean that more students will have the opportunity to study abroad at some point in their academic career, even if they could not take a full year or even a semester abroad because of work or family obligations, or because of tightly sequenced course requirements in their fields of study. But it also means that many more students are going for short-term study, including some that take place during summer or January terms or as one component of an academic course that they are taking on their home campus. Educators must work hard to make these experiences meaningful, with contact with local populations and not just fellow American students, and to encourage students to go abroad for a longer time whenever it is possible.

Where Are the Students Going and For How Long?

The most recent *Open Doors Report* shows less than 5 percent of the U.S. study abroad students did so for a full academic or calendar year. The number of students going abroad for an academic year has actually been holding relatively flat, but the increase over the past few decades primarily reflects more students going for a semester or less, or even for a few weeks.

According to reports by students and educators, students are getting a lot out of the study abroad experiences, whether they are long or short. Educators are integrating short-term experiences abroad into longer courses that focus on the language and culture of the destination, or make the study abroad experience a key part of the course—for example, a key field work component for a course in public health or environmental students.

Students are also diversifying their study abroad destinations. The UK remains by far the leading host country for American students studying abroad, hosting more than 30,000 U.S. study abroad students, plus more than 16,000 full degree students. By contrast, there were fewer than 9,000 students from the UK enrolled in U.S. higher education last year.

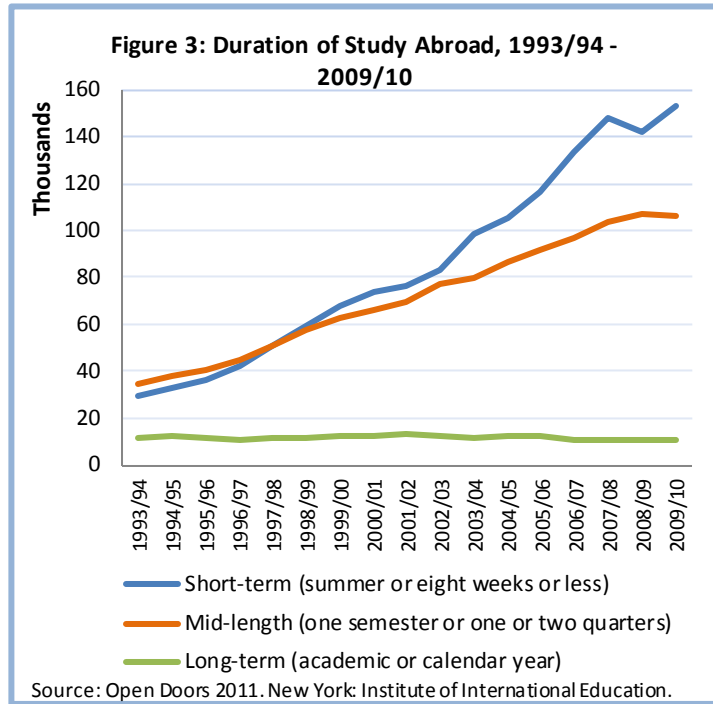


Figure 4: Top 20 Destinations of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2008/09 & 2009/10

Rank	Destination	2008/09	2009/10	% of Total	Change
	WORLD TOTAL	260,327	270,604	100.0	3.9%
1	United Kingdom	31,342	32,683	12.1	4.3%
2	Italy	27,362	27,940	10.3	2.1%
3	Spain	24,169	25,411	9.4	5.1%
4	France	16,910	17,161	6.3	1.5%
5	China	13,674	13,910	5.1	1.7%
6	Australia	11,140	9,962	3.7	-10.6%
7	Germany	8,330	8,551	3.2	2.7%
8	Mexico	7,320	7,157	2.6	-2.2%
9	Ireland	6,858	6,798	2.5	-0.9%
10	Costa Rica	6,363	6,262	2.3	-1.6%
11	Japan	5,784	6,166	2.3	6.6%
12	Argentina	4,705	4,835	1.8	2.8%
13	South Africa	4,160	4,313	1.6	3.7%
14	India	2,690	3,884	1.4	44.4%
15	Greece	3,616	3,700	1.4	2.3%
16	Czech Republic	3,664	3,409	1.3	-7.0%
17	Israel	1,958	3,146	1.2	60.7%
18	Chile	3,503	3,115	1.2	-11.1%
19	New Zealand	2,769	3,113	1.2	12.4%
20	Brazil	2,777	3,099	1.1	11.6%

Source: Open Doors 2011. New York: Institute of International Education.

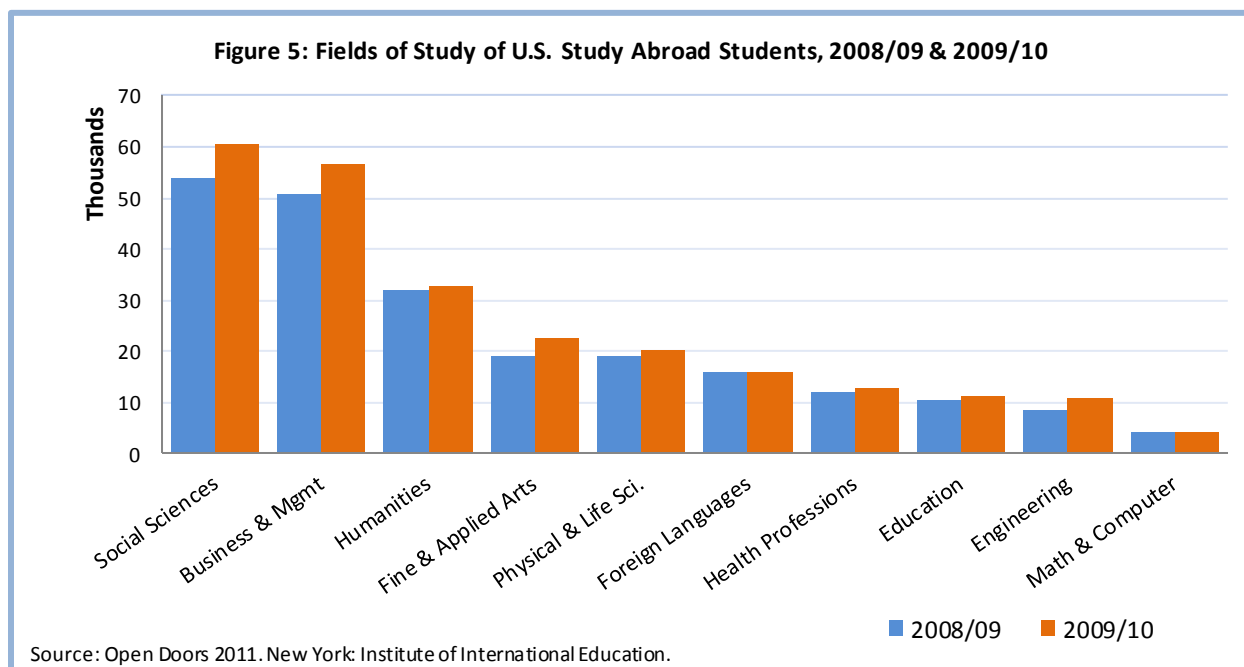
Europe is the only world region in which the number of U.S. students it hosts outnumber the students from the region who come to the U.S. to study.

The next three top host destinations are also in Europe—Italy, Spain, and France each hosted more than 15,000 U.S. study abroad students annually—but now China has become the fifth leading host. There has been a surge of interest in study in China in the past decade, with nearly 14,000 U.S. students studying in China in 2009/10 compared to fewer than 3,000 in 1999/00.

There were notable increases in U.S. students going to study in many of the less traditional destinations in the 2009/10

academic year, although these were from a relatively low base. Fifteen of the top 25 destinations were outside of Western Europe and nineteen were countries where English is not a primary language.

The leading fields of study for Americans studying abroad are the social sciences (22 percent of those studying abroad) followed closely by business and management (21 percent), and then the humanities (12 percent), fine or applied arts (8 percent), and physical/life sciences (also close to 8 percent). Somewhat surprising is that foreign language students make up only about 6 percent of those who study abroad, only a slightly higher proportion than those in education or engineering.



What Is the Role of U.S. Government Funding for Study Abroad?

The U.S. government provides substantial support to fund targeted international experiences for U.S. students through academic, professional, and cultural exchanges.

The U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) funds the Gilman Scholarships to help more American undergraduates with financial need to be able to take part in study abroad opportunities, and to promote diversity among students going abroad.

ECA’s Fulbright Fellowships enable some 1,600 U.S. graduate students and graduating seniors to study, teach English, or conduct research abroad each year.

The Boren Scholarships and Fellowships, funded by the National Security Education Program, enable students to study critical languages in destinations that are less common among the U.S. study abroad population. While these programs fund a relatively small proportion of all study abroad students, they play a major role in advancing these strategic goals.

A Final Word: The Role and Vision of Campus Leadership

Now, more than ever before, higher education has a global mandate. To remain competitive, higher education must keep pace with the rapid globalization of our society, made possible in large part by technology enabled rapid flows of ideas and information. Leading higher education institutions have recognized this by “going global” and internationalizing their campuses, not only in facilitating study abroad and hosting international students, but also in internationalizing the faculty and the curriculum. What they say and do makes a real difference to the experience and outlook that their students gain.

In the spirit of providing tangible ways the British higher education system can learn from other country models, IIE features a "Best Practices" website that highlights the programs that have won IIE's Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education over the past 10 years. I invite you to take a look at these award-winning programs, which are intended to be both inspirational and replicable. For example, at IIE's annual Best Practices Conference in New York a few weeks ago, Allan Goodman presented the University of Rhode Island with IIE's 2012 award for an innovative approach to study abroad, for its five-year program that grants students a BS in engineering and a BA in a foreign language. In the fourth year of the program the students go abroad to study engineering in the foreign language (German, French, Spanish, or Chinese) in the host country university, and then do a hands-on internship with a company in the host country (for example, one University of Rhode Island student in Germany took engineering classes in German and held an engineering internship at BMW).

As Kofi Annan, a member of Investcorp's European Advisory Board said at my alma mater Northwestern University's commencement ceremony a few years ago,

"We are all being influenced by the same tides of political, social, and technological change. We are connected by travel, sport, communications, and commerce. Your actions here in Evanston can influence life in Eritrea; and what happens in India has implications for Illinois. . . . And in such a world, we need each and every individual to act as a global citizen."

Study abroad is unquestionably a wonderful step in that direction.

It is with that as our challenge and in that spirit of optimism that I thank you for inviting me to participate. Together, let us not define what is possible by what has been accomplished, rather by what can be achieved.

BEST PRACTICES IN CAMPUS INTERNATIONALIZATION

Throughout the United States, universities and colleges of all types are preparing students for global challenges in the workplace and beyond. They are doing so by internationalizing their curricula, hosting more international students, sending more U.S. students abroad, and partnering with institutions overseas.

In 2001, IIE established the Andrew Heiskell Awards for Innovation in International Education to promote and honor outstanding initiatives at institutions in IIE's membership association. The winning initiatives from each year are profiled on IIE's Best Practices website to provide replicable models to guide and inspire other campuses.

Winning programs demonstrate that institutions of every size and type can commit themselves to welcoming international students on their campuses and preparing their U.S. students for global competency. Programs include student and faculty exchanges, dual and joint degree programs, and other innovatively designed curricula and partnerships.

For example, in 2012, the University of Rhode Island's International Engineering Program was honored for its study abroad program, which serves as a model for engineering and language educators across the country. In addition, the Rwanda Presidential Scholars Program, a partnership between the Rwandan government and a consortium led by Hendrix College, was recognized for innovation in fostering international partnerships.

To read detailed profiles of best practices and to nominate your institution, visit the Best Practices in Internationalization website at www.iie.org/internationalization.

APPENDIX A: FUNDING RESOURCES FOR U.S. STUDY ABROAD

Fulbright Program: U.S. Student Competition

The Fulbright U.S. Student Program equips future American leaders with the skills they need to thrive in an increasingly global environment by providing funding for one academic year of study or research abroad, to be conducted after graduation from an accredited university. Included in the Fulbright U.S. Student Program are English Teaching Assistantships, which provide opportunities for U.S. students to help teach English language and conversation alongside host country English teachers in select countries in Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, and Latin America. Website: <http://us.fulbrightonline.org>

Fulbright English Teaching Assistantships (ETA)

English Teaching Assistantships are offered in many countries worldwide and individual elements may vary by country. In most cases, ETAs are placed in schools or universities outside of capital cities, are assigned various activities designed to improve their students' language abilities and knowledge of the United States, and are fully integrated into the host community, increasing their own language skills and knowledge of the host country. ETAs may pursue individual study/research plans in addition to ETA responsibilities. Website: http://us.fulbrightonline.org/thinking_teaching.html

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program

The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, offers scholarships for undergraduate students who are receiving Federal Pell Grant funding at a two- or four-year college or university to participate in study abroad programs worldwide. Website: www.iie.org/gilman

Boren Scholarships & Fellowships

Funding from the National Security Education Program (NSEP) supports U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to study less commonly taught languages in world regions critical to U.S. interests. Funding of up to \$20,000 is available for undergraduates and \$30,000 for graduate students, depending on cost and length of program. Website: www.borenawards.org

Freeman-ASIA Awards for Study in Asia

Freeman-ASIA supports U.S. undergraduates with demonstrated financial need who are planning to study overseas in East or Southeast Asia. The program's goal is to increase the number of Americans with firsthand exposure to and understanding of Asia and its peoples and cultures. Award recipients are required to share their experiences with their home campuses or communities to encourage study abroad by others and fulfill the program's goal of increasing understanding of Asia in the United States. Beginning in 2001, Freeman-ASIA supported over 4,000 U.S. undergraduates from more than 600 institutions with their study abroad plans in East and Southeast Asia, with generous funding from the Freeman Foundation. Website: www.iie.org/freeman-asia

Whitaker International Fellows and Scholars Program

The Whitaker Program supports biomedical engineers (and bioengineers), from graduating seniors through postdoctorates, in conducting high-quality research or study overseas. Website: www.whitaker.org

APPENDIX B: ANNOUNCEMENT ISSUED BY THE BRITISH ACADEMY, MARCH 27, 2012

CHANGES TO UNIVERSITY FUNDING WILL DETER UK STUDENTS FROM TAKING A YEAR ABROAD

Concern is mounting that fewer UK students will take degree courses involving a year abroad because of the step change in tuition fees—despite new research for the British Academy and the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) which demonstrates the huge benefits that a year spent studying or working abroad confer on graduates.

The British Academy and UCML are calling on Government to seek ways of minimizing the financial disincentives involved in an extra year's study. In a joint position statement, [*Valuing the Year Abroad*](#), launched on Tuesday, March 27, 2012, they called on the government and universities to recognize the strategic importance of the year abroad—delivering both competitive employability advantages for the students themselves and wider long term benefits for the whole UK economy.

"Britain desperately needs more well-educated, highly skilled graduates who are capable of living and working effectively in any geographical, cultural and linguistic setting."

**—Professor Nigel Vincent,
Vice-President of the British Academy.**

Figures released by UCAS in January this year showed that the some of the steepest falls in undergraduate applications for 2012/13 were for modern language degrees—11.2 percent for European languages and 21.5 percent for non-European languages—typically four year courses with a year spent abroad.

"Britain desperately needs more well-educated, highly skilled graduates who are capable of living and working effectively in any geographical, cultural and linguistic setting," said Professor Nigel Vincent, Vice-President of the British Academy. "Positive action is needed to promote its value and ensure students are not discouraged from taking up these courses by the extra costs involved."

Professor Jim Coleman, Chair of UCML, added: "Business Secretary Vince Cable recognized earlier this month that 'we need a generation of people who speak other people's languages' and that this meant more British students spending time abroad as part of their degrees. But to achieve this, we need to reduce and not increase the financial obstacles."

In the graduate survey—carried out by [ThirdYearAbroad.com](#)—two thirds estimated that their residence abroad was a significant factor in getting their first and subsequent jobs, with no fewer than 86 percent considering the year abroad to be the most valuable part of their degree.

At a time when student mobility is rapidly expanding, British students are already far less likely to study abroad than their mainland European counterparts, with only 17,000 UK students (home and EU) spending a year abroad in 2009/10 as part of their degree—just 1.7 percent of all UK undergraduates.

This problem has already been acknowledged by the Government in its *Innovation and Research Strategy for Growth*¹ and by the CBI's recent Education and Skills Survey² (2), which highlighted language skills as particularly important in sectors such as manufacturing and banking, finance, and insurance—reflecting the increasingly global focus of these sectors.

The position statement, [*Valuing the Year Abroad*](#), was launched at a conference taking place at the British Academy on Tuesday, 27 March. Speakers included Baroness Garden of Frognal, Government spokesman for Higher Education in the Lords, and Baroness Coussins, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages.

The British Academy, established by Royal Charter in 1902, is the national body that champions and supports excellence in the humanities and social sciences. Through its four-year £5m Languages & Quantitative Skills (L&QS) Programme, the Academy is seeking to build capacity and strengthen skills in these two vital areas.

¹ Innovation and Research Strategy for Growth (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, December 2011): page 65.

² Building for growth: Business priorities for education and skills (CBI, 2011).

APPENDIX C: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BRITISH ACADEMY UCML JOINT POSITION STATEMENT [EXCERPT]:

Addressing the challenges outlined here in an effective and sustainable manner, which ensures the UK's ability to compete internationally, requires both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. We therefore make the following recommendations to government, universities, employers and students:

Recommendations to Government

Government is urged to:

- Acknowledge the exceptional contribution of work and study abroad to the pool of highly skilled UK graduates, and also the return for UK plc on investment in the year abroad;
- Recognize that over 99 percent of the world's mobile students are not British, and that the UK must expand outgoing numbers of students across all disciplines, in order to reduce the deficit with our economic competitors;
- Minimize financial disincentives for the small but currently growing number of students who wish to undertake a year abroad, recognize that the cost of a year abroad is the greatest disincentive to students, and that the market alone may not attract enough UK students to take a year abroad;
- Level the playing field between Erasmus and non-Erasmus, European and Non-European, work and study placements;
- Help reduce language obstacles to the mobility of specialists in other disciplines by supporting university-wide language programmes;
- Recognize the challenge to Equal Opportunities and Widening Participation posed by current year abroad statistics in which ethnic minorities and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are underrepresented.

Recommendations to universities

Recognizing the strategic importance of, and need for, internationalization at the heart of their agendas, universities are urged to:

- Recognize the competitive employability advantage conferred on their graduates by including a year abroad in the degree program;
- Recognize the attraction which year abroad provision represents for the brightest and best qualified students, provided costs are within market expectations;
- Moderate, through central funding, the fees charged to students for their year abroad;
- Make targeted bursaries available to students of modest means;
- Support and encourage Departments across all disciplines to make a year abroad available at reasonable cost.

Recommendations to Employers

UK employers are urged to:

- Acknowledge explicitly in their recruitment and publicity materials the competitive advantage which a year abroad adds to a candidate's CV;
- Acknowledge explicitly the added value which employee skills gained during the year abroad bring to the company;
- Make targeted bursaries available for disadvantaged students to undertake a year abroad.

Recommendations to Students

Students are urged to:

- Recognize the great potential benefits of a year abroad for their future employability, and for a satisfying graduate career in an increasingly international job market;
- Explore all available sources of funding to enable them to undertake what is likely to be the most challenging, most rewarding and most fun year of their lives.

APPENDIX D

Valuing the Year Abroad

Tuesday, March 27, 2012

British Academy, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH

PROGRAM

10.30 Welcome and Introduction

Baroness Onora O'Neill, former President of the British Academy

10.45 Launch of the Position Statement, Valuing the Year Abroad

- Professor Jim Coleman, Professor of Language Learning and Teaching, The Open University
- Professor Nigel Vincent, Vice-President for Research and Higher Education, British Academy
- Lizzie Fane, Founder, ThirdYearAbroad.com

11.30 Keynote Speech:

Rt Hon Baroness Garden of Frogmal, Government Spokesperson in the House of Lords for Business, Innovation and Skills (Higher Education)

11.50 Study abroad Programmes in the UK and the issues facing British universities

Chair: Baroness Jean Coussins, Chair, All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages

- Dr Joanna Newman, Director (International), Universities UK
- Chris Millward, Associate Director, Higher Education Funding Council for England
- Martin Davidson, Chief Executive, British Council
- David Docherty, Chief Executive, Council for Industry and Higher Education

1.30 Lunch

2.30 Studying abroad: International comparisons

Chair: Matthew Reisz, Times Higher Education

- Professor Sir Drummond Bone, Master of Balliol College, Oxford
- Scott Freidheim, Member of the Board of Trustees, Institute of International Education
- Professor Dr Wang Lifei, University of International Business and Economics, Beijing
- Professor Ulrich Teichler, International Centre for Higher Education Research Kassel and at the Department for Social Sciences, University of Kassel

About the Institute of International Education

The Institute of International Education, founded in 1919, is a world leader in the exchange of people and ideas. IIE has a network of 30 offices worldwide and 1,100 college and university members. In collaboration with governments, corporate and private foundations, and other sponsors, IIE designs and implements programs of study and training for students, educators, young professionals, and trainees from all sectors with funding from government and private sources. These programs include the Fulbright and Humphrey Fellowships and the Gilman Scholarships, administered for the U.S. Department of State, and the Boren Scholarships and Fellowships administered for the National Security Education Program. IIE also provides advising and counseling on international education, and conducts policy research. IIE's publications include the *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, as well as *Funding for United States Study*, the *IIE Passport Study Abroad* print and online directories, and the StudyAbroadFunding.org website.

www.iie.org

About IIE's Center for Academic Mobility Research

The IIE Center for Academic Mobility Research brings together the Institute's in-house research expertise with leading minds from around the world to conduct and disseminate timely and relevant research and policy analysis in the field of international student and faculty mobility. The Center provides applied research and program evaluation services to domestic and international governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, corporations, and foundations. The Center's in-depth books and reports, including the well-known *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*, supported by the U.S. Department of State, are key reference resources. In addition, the Center's policy papers and snapshot surveys rapidly capture trends in the changing landscape of international education.

The core activities of the Center fall within three key areas:

- Driving policy and program decisions through applied research and analysis
- Fostering and disseminating knowledge
- Training the next generation of mobility researchers

www.iie.org/mobility