

Tips for Talking to Your Family About Studying Abroad

Sometimes it's hard to know how and when to start talking with your family about studying abroad. You've made the decision and it's important to you to have their support. The most important thing is to talk to them early about your plan to study abroad and to approach the conversation having done your homework. Below are some areas to consider including in your conversation and some facts about why AIFS is an excellent choice for your experience abroad:

1. **Explain why you want to study abroad** and how it will positively affect your academic and career goals. Your parents might not have spent time overseas and thus don't understand why you want to study abroad. They might be concerned that going abroad will delay your graduation. The reality is that, depending on which program you pick, you can stay on track for graduation and the 4-year graduation rates for study abroad students are 17.8 higher than those that don't study abroad.
2. **Talk about the different skills that you will gain** in spending time abroad (including, but not limited to:
 - Independence
 - Responsibility
 - Accountability
 - Self-Confidence
 - Self-Awareness
 - Appreciation of Differences
 - Tolerance of Ambiguity
 - Learning or mastering a second language
3. **Listen to their concerns and questions about studying abroad.** It's important that you allow your family to voice any concerns they have over you leaving the country. This allows you to ease their minds and show them all of the benefits the experience will provide.
4. **Keep bringing it up.** Sometimes your family needs to hear about studying abroad more than once in order to understand how important it is to you and that you are serious about wanting to spend time abroad.
5. **Do your research beforehand.** Your family is going to want to know details about your program of interest as well as a rationale for why you want to go abroad. You will be less likely to be taken seriously if you just say "it seems like fun." Doing your homework on studying abroad means you are taking this opportunity seriously and you want your family to do the same.
6. **Know how much it is going to cost** compared to spending that time at home. Research scholarships, grants and other ways to pay for your program before you talk with them. Talk with your financial aid office to see if your financial aid package and university scholarships can travel on the program.
7. **Allow time for your family to support your decision** and get all of your paperwork and program logistics sorted out.
8. **Assure them that you will stay in contact** while overseas. Some families establish a schedule for a live phone or online conversation (e.g., via Skype) every few weeks, while some students write a blog to share with family members, etc.
9. **Get your family involved in the process.** Encourage them to read the information on your program and location of choice so they can share in your excitement.
10. **Know that you don't have to know all of the answers...**as long as you know where to get them. If they have very specific questions about your program that you don't know the answer to, you can always direct them to the website and have them contact us directly. Due to privacy policies, we will not be able to share specific information on your application, but we would be able to answer questions on program locations and procedures.



AIFS Fast Facts:

LESS THAN 10% of the US college population studies abroad. By taking part in a study abroad program, you are setting yourself apart from your peers and making yourself even more attractive to a future employer!

ALL-INCLUSIVE:

- AIFS programs are all-inclusive (tuition, meals, housing, excursions, pre-departure materials, insurance and more), so there is very little you need to worry about once you're onsite
- We are the only provider that offers a flight package (including airport transfers) as well

- AIFS prices are guaranteed (in US Dollars) for the duration of the catalog, so your program fees will not be affected despite what the US dollar does against foreign currencies
- AIFS does not charge a credit card fee if you charge any or all of your program fees
- More information on scholarships can be found at www.aifsabroad.com/scholarships

SAFETY:

- AIFS has staff on-site at all of our locations, so you always have someone to contact in an emergency
- Our staff all speaks English as well as the native language
- All of our Resident Directors have spent time in the US, so they know what it's like to cross cultures.
- AIFS has a 24/7 emergency number in case your family needs to get ahold of you.
- Our staff are constantly monitoring the US State Department and can act fast if a location requires attention
- Your AIFS insurance (included on all AIFS study abroad programs) will cover you in a medical or evacuation emergency

LOCATION:

- AIFS only operates programs in locations that are safe and not under a US State Department Travel Warning
- AIFS only works with accredited universities overseas, so you can transfer your credits back as you would from another US institution

EXPERIENCE:

- AIFS has been around since 1964 and has helped more than 1.5 million students go abroad
- AIFS works closely with the Forum on Education Abroad, which sets the standards and best practices for the field of international education
- 85.4% of AIFS Alumni agree that "Overall, studying abroad with AIFS was the most meaningful experience of my undergraduate education."

COST:

- AIFS offers more than \$600,000 in scholarships and grants to students on our programs
- In many cases your federal and state financial aid monies can be applied to your program fees
- Often times the financial aid office can make a cost of living adjustment so you have access to more funds for the time you are abroad
- AIFS accepts outside scholarships

Sources: A Student Guide to Study Abroad published by the IIE and the AIFS Foundation and the AIFS Alumni Survey



FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.AIFSABROAD.COM

...where you can sign up for our newsletter, read stories from alumni and even apply online!

