

Study Abroad in Exercise Science

“As an international member of faculty here at GVSU, and having been a faculty member at Kingston University, one of our partner institutions in England, I strongly advocate for our students to participate in study abroad. It provides them with excellent and unique educational knowledge and skills that can only be gained from studying abroad. Also, it gives students the chance to experience new cultures, beliefs, and environments that can enrich their own personal and career development. Every student I know who has participated in study abroad has come back with endless stories of new friends and exciting adventures, and partly wishes they hadn’t had to come back!”

Ross Sherman, Ph.D. – Program Coordinator, B.S. Exercise Science.

Study abroad can help you...

- Understand the discipline of exercise science from an international perspective;
- Expand your cross-cultural communication and problem-solving skills;
- Work in an increasingly diverse and international workplace;
- Broaden your academic opportunities;
- Globalize your world view through direct experience of other cultures.

But what about.....

Do I need to speak a foreign language?

NO! Most study abroad programs offer classes in English, even in non-English speaking countries.

Can I afford to study abroad?

YES! Early planning for study abroad helps in preparing your finances through savings, scholarships, and financial aid. Your financial aid applies to study abroad and, in some cases, your loan eligibility will increase to cover additional expenses. Furthermore, the Padnos International Center offers grants and scholarships specifically for qualified study abroad participants. Visit the Padnos Center to learn more about your options.

Will I take longer to graduate?

With advance planning, you can take courses that satisfy requirements in your movement science major or the general education program. Study abroad should only enrich your experience and does not necessarily have to delay the completion of your degree.

What are my next steps?

Set goals and plan for results

Exercise science students can study abroad at any time during their four years. The process of selecting a study abroad program is similar to selecting your major.

- Plan ahead. Begin at least six months in advance of your study abroad. Give yourself time to research and talk to advisors and students who have studied abroad. It is never too early to start planning so you don't miss application deadlines.
- Set some goals. There is not one program that is best suited for exercise science students. There are many good study abroad programs, and the best one for you depends on what you want.
- Prioritize your goals. Consider your long-term academic and professional goals, as well as your on-campus degree requirements.
- Consider long-term programs. You can study abroad for a summer session, a semester, or even an academic year.
- With proper planning study abroad can help you prepare for your professional life in today's global context.

Attend an Information Session

Learn about study abroad resources and advising by attending an Information Meeting at the Padnos International Center. See www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad/ or call 616-331-3898 for the latest schedule.

Investigate Programs

Use this advising sheet, the study abroad catalog, resource center, website, and advisors to find a program that fits your goals.

Talk to your advisor

Use a credit transfer form to get approval from the department for major-specific courses. Keep in mind that students are also able to fulfill general education requirements abroad, including a custom theme.

Once you have selected a program

Exercise science students planning on studying abroad will need to communicate closely with their academic advisor throughout their planning process. When you decide on the program that will work best for you, you should begin an online study abroad application at www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad/. Be sure to pay close attention to application deadlines.

Be sure to meet with your advisor **at least three months prior** to departing for your program. The department must approve any exercise science courses you wish to take to ensure that they will be counted toward your degree requirements.

Academic considerations for exercise science students

What classes can I take while studying abroad?

General Education Requirements

Students may take selected general education requirements through study abroad. Many students choose to fulfill foundation requirements, including courses within the World Perspectives category.

Custom Theme Abroad

Another popular option is to fulfill your theme requirement while studying abroad. For information on how to propose a unique study abroad theme, visit the Padnos International Center website at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad/>.

Cognate Degree Requirement

The exercise science major requires successful completion of STA 215, MOV 304, and either BMS 202 or BMS 208.

You can consider taking some or all of these classes while studying abroad, however prior approval is needed.

Major courses

Many study abroad programs offer a wide selection of courses, including courses that can be approved by the department to contribute to your major. It is required that you fulfill the MOV 495 class at GVSU.

Living what you are learning

A great advantage of studying abroad is living in the region you are studying. Learning about the history, language, and literature of your home-away-from-home enhances your experiences outside the classroom. Your daily interaction with the local culture also brings the subjects you are learning to life.

Recommended Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes appropriate for exercise science students studying abroad are:

1. Outline the basis and history of exercise science as a subject in that country/geographical region, as well as the current focus of study and/or research;
2. Gain an awareness of the careers and graduate opportunities available in that country/continent;
3. Provide a historical context for understanding the changing views (individual vs. public policy) of the relationship between physical activity and public health in that country/continent compared to the United States;
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the range of factors related to systematic patterns of unequal distribution of physical activity levels, nutritional intake, and health in that country/continent;

5. Explain the role/acceptance of exercise science as a tool for improving athletic and sports performance for individuals and teams, and any similarities and differences compared to the United States;
6. Enhance practical, hands-on skills that are used and appropriate within the exercise science field, in both laboratory and field settings.