

Episode #4 - General Planning for Study Abroad

[Opening Music, plays continually through the introduction]

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the fourth episode of Global, Here and Now - the podcast that highlights the many ways students in the Poole College of Management can engage globally. I'm your host, Ellen Frost and today, we're going to talk about how to plan for a future study abroad experience. Now, let's go global.

[Transition]

Lead-In to Topic

On this episode of Global, Here and Now, we are going to talk about how to plan for a study abroad experience. We will focus primarily on semester or year-long programs as these types of programs have a longer planning and application process than a summer program. However, most of the topics we discuss are good to think about regardless of where, when and how you study abroad.

With so many study abroad programs and destinations to choose from and the steps to complete before you head abroad, it can be daunting to figure out how to get started. With a little organization and support from our office, we'll get you to where you want to be! I'm going to highlight some of the key topics to start thinking about now whether you are still on the fence about studying abroad or ready to start an application. Topics we will discuss today include academics, timing & location, funding and the overall application process. Then, we will hear from a student who has studied abroad.

[Transition Music]

Content

Academics

To start off, we're going to focus on academics. Academics is one of the most important components to studying abroad. Before you even start thinking of the locations you want to go, you need to come up with an academic plan. This academic plan includes thinking about what courses you're going to take before, during and after you study abroad. This might seem like a lot but it's the most effective way to ensure that you make progress towards your degree and graduation while studying abroad. And remember, you won't be doing this alone.

The Global Programs website has resources specific to each major in Poole outlining good courses to take abroad and which courses you need to take at NC State. You can also see what courses students have taken on specific programs and locations. Once you look at our website, the next step is to make an appointment with us to discuss your academic options. We're also in constant communication with your Academic Advisor so you can rest easy knowing that they are involved in making your academic plans!

A few things to highlight about courses abroad -

- The vast majority of courses are taught in English so language should not be a barrier when thinking about courses to take.
- For a semester abroad, you will take the equivalent of 12 to 15 credits abroad and for a summer, most students take between 6-9 credits.
- Most students take a variety of courses abroad - some general education requirements and some major requirements. Some students even take minor courses abroad as well. The specific courses you take will be unique to your plan.

The bottom line is that from an academic perspective, studying abroad will keep you on track for graduation and offers a lot of flexibility in terms of what courses to take. The key is planning and our office is eager to help you get started - it's never too early!

[Transition Music]

Timing & Location

Considerations for when and where to study abroad are our next topic to discuss. There are so many cities and destinations to choose from when deciding where you want to study abroad that it can often feel like an impossible choice. Try to narrow down the type of location that interests you the most. Questions to think about include:

1. Do you want to be in an English-speaking area or somewhere where you need to speak a foreign language?
2. Is there a country or region of the world that appeals most to you?
3. Would you rather live in a bigger city or a smaller town?
4. Is it important to you that you be centrally located to travel on the weekends?

In terms of the timing of your study abroad experience, there is no single best time to study abroad as this is going to be unique to you and your timeline. Most students study abroad sometime between the summer after their first year through the summer after their junior year. For semester programs, the most popular time is Spring semester of sophomore year or during junior year. As with academics, the key is planning early!

[Transition Music]

Funding & Application Process

The third topic to address is how you will pay for your study abroad experience. Funding study abroad is often a concern of many students and parents; however, it is doable and there are many resources to support you. Typically, students use a combination of resources including financial aid, scholarships, and personal funds to pay for their international experience. Start by thinking about your expenses including airfare, housing, meals, transportation and personal expenses in your desired location. This will help you figure out your budget. All study abroad programs at NC State have an outlined budget that will help you begin. If you already receive financial aid at NC State, you can also use it to fund your study abroad program.

The University Study Abroad Office and the Poole College of Management also provides scholarships specific to study abroad. Check studyabroad.ncsu.edu to check on deadlines for the scholarship applications and to learn more about all the scholarships that are available.

[Transition music]

Now, that was a lot of information so we want to bring in a student who has gone through this process to share their insights. Joining us today is Nick Sather, a senior in the Poole College of Management. Nick studied abroad twice - during the summer on the Australia: Entrepreneurship program and for a semester at Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid, Spain. He'll tell us a little bit about those experiences as well as how he planned ahead of time to fit in study abroad.

- When did you start thinking about studying abroad? Can you tell me how you chose your programs or locations?
- What were the biggest factors you thought about when choosing when and where to study abroad?
- What resources or tools did you use when planning for studying abroad?
- How did studying abroad fit into your academic plans?
- What advice would you give someone who is unsure of where to start?
- What would you say are the biggest differences between your summer and semester programs?
- Looking back at your study abroad experiences, what are some of your favorite memories or lessons that you learned?

[Transition music]

Interview

Ellen Frost: So to get started in it. Can you share a little bit about when you started thinking about selling abroad, and then how did you end up choosing the programs and locations that you went to

Nick Sather: Yeah, so I'm a certain thing about selling you brought a lot when I was in high school I was fortunate to have my dad. Kind of grew me to really enjoy traveling abroad and Just like the international experience in general. And so, like, ever since I was in high school, I wanted to study abroad. I was actually Fortunate to travel to Spain, a couple times when I was in high school and I just like fell in love with that and like the whole experience of, you know, immerse in like immersing immersing yourself in a new culture right and so And then when I got to when I got to college. It was kind of like planning my first year and a half around Starting and being able to study abroad in the first place. And so, choosing the location was kind of a combination of like a bunch of different things. I think four factors is kind of what I kind of came up with. So, like, one was a language. I wanted to study. So like my main goal was to study abroad for five months in another country and ideally was in Spain and started out in Spain. But then once I got to pull in got to state. I was fascinated with actually the all the other options. And so I was hit with like this, this You know, large variety of options. I can choose from and instead of like, you know, just focusing on span now had all the, you know, I can go to Amsterdam or I can study in Australia studying, you know, China, or something like that. But then I also, you know, I also considered this. The second and you know the other reasons, and the second one was kind of where I wanted to be located. Because, you know, if you study in China over a lot of times you can only released a or travel maybe around China. And then, you know, the third one for me was also cost. So like Spain in general and Countries around Spain. Spain in general and Madrid is pretty expensive to live around You know, cost of housing in the food is pretty inexpensive and travel is pretty inexpensive to do you play cards right you can, you know, Travel very, very cheaply like under 100 euros to like a different country which is so cool to do and we were fortunate enough to do that on different occasions over the weekends, because The school. I went to Madrid didn't have Friday classes. And that's just how they operated but it allowed us give us like a really unique opportunity to travel to different places over over you know weekend where we can get off a class. I think around two or 3pm on a Thursday. And if we really want to go straight to the airport and then I get to a new country that evening and and have all of Friday and Saturday to experience that country. And then leave you know Sunday evening or something like that, which is really cool and then You know, the third one was our third or fourth reason to kind of forget which one of that. But, um, I would say it was kind of like a, you know,

the school. I wanted to go to like which one might have the best classes for for me which one my head provide the best education or my experience because, you know, even if I wanted to go to Italy really badly. You know, there's a chance at the school might might provide business classes or classes that I wanted to take, but You know, it may not Excel as much as a school in Amsterdam. Right. And so, Spain and Colombia was was a has has a really good business program. And so I was really fortunate enough to have that the benefit of all already wanting to go to Spain and having a really exceptional school to be able to attend when I was there.

Ellen Frost: So that's great. And I like how You talked about a lot of different factors, because sometimes I think students will think about one factor that will drive their decision, but a lot of times it's It's thinking about all the different factors and how they play into finding the right program. So you talked a little bit about the courses. Can you share How you fit studying abroad into your kind of for your academic plan and pool and maybe even touch on the differences of like the courses you took on the Australia summer program versus the courses you may be took during your semester program in Spain.

Nick Sather: Yeah, sure. So, um, the summer course in Australia that I took with a little bit more Wasn't as geared towards advancing my education. It ended up doing that so You know, it went with my entrepreneurship program or my concentration which was, you know, just another coincidental and choosing You know that there was able to fit my my concentration, but also just being like Super cool. Cuz I'm never when it came out freshman year, and I saw that you know that that they were doing this and like I have the chance to go to Australia, like, you know, and get credit for it you know that that's that's so so so cool. And so my two friends who were also my entrepreneurship concentration were both also really intrigued by that. And so we made a commitment to go do that.

And then we ended up falling through and so like having those classes. A Tribute to my concentration credits, really, really helped and it put me ahead, and even allowed me more room. To be more comfortable to study abroad for another five months, whereas able to take only four classes for this semester, instead of five, which you know just makes the whole five months and works, you know, A better journey. Overall, because you're not, you know, as, as hampered with with, you know, courses and homework in certain projects that you might be working on while you're abroad. So, and then, Spain, like I just said, I've given myself enough room through bringing different credits from high school, a couple classes. As well as going to Australia and giving, giving myself a little bit of a head start towards my concentration as a freshman, which is super cool and pretty rare to see It allowed me, like I said, a lot of room to kind of To be more

comfortable and dicks. Enjoy the experience as more like fulfillment than than just kind of go in there and focusing on classes because The, you know, half I live with 10 people when I was in Spain and and half of them were business students, half of them were engineering students at come yes because they also have a phenomenal engineering school to And a lot of the engineering students were often off you know we're not capable of traveling over the weekend because you know they had to take at least five classes in that could be the very much dependent on just engineering programs and in general. Which is another benefit of kind of been fortunate to be a business student but Yeah. So I hope that answers the question correctly.

Ellen Frost: Yeah, no, that's great. So we talked a little bit about the courses and how they were different between the Summer and a semester. Can you just share a little bit about like other experiences or differences that you notice we have a lot of students who are thinking You know, should I go abroad for a summer or should I go abroad for a semester. Many will only have the option to do one you were able to do both to kind of walk us through what we're maybe pros and cons of each type of experiences. And what were some of the differences you noticed between them.

Nick Sather: Yeah, so I'm studying abroad for a summer you you're kind of placed with NC State faculty when you go abroad so obviously courses are taught in English and no matter where you go and their NC State courses but They're more of a crash course is what I like to kind of think about them as is where you get the information But, you know, a lot of times is cramped, at least from my my course it's it's total of five weeks. And so we took One class for, like, I think two and a half weeks, three weeks and then another two courses. Following that, for another two and a half to three weeks. And so, you know, you're spending essentially the whole day or not. I want to say the whole day but like at least half the day from 8am or 830 to roughly like 2pm, you know, studying that one course. And getting like trying to soak up as much information as possible. And then when you go to Spain, it's, it's, you know, you're, you're, you're taught, you're going to another school right so it's completely Independent from NC State. So you're you're going with You know you can elect to take English classes, which is what I did, partly because I knew I'd probably suffer if I took Spanish classes. But you also get a completely different learning experience because you're taught by professors from my end one professor who is Who spoke Spanish, but he was French and he taught supply chain. Then I had, you know, the two or three other professors. One was German. Who didn't also spoke Spanish and taught my my HR class. And then the other two people were professors were Spanish and so adapting and learning from their styles is is more difficult than a summer program, but It's also challenging and rewarding at the same time. Yeah, so

Ellen Frost: So I'm thinking about like how you went about flying and, you know, researching these programs, what resources or tools did you use when you were thinking about. So you buy. Did you meet with anyone, what resources on campus. Did you utilize to help make your decision.

Nick Sather: Yeah, I do remember going to the the study abroad fair At least once when I was a freshman, and then I definitely met with you, Miss Ross, at least probably three to four times probably two to three times before each trip. You know and I, personally, I did a lot of it's just the way that I went about it. But I'd take all my questions or concerns and I meet Well, prior to the start date of the application deadline and go and talk to you and be like, Okay, this is what I want to do. How do I get there, and then you would guide me you know saying like, okay, you need to fill out this or you need to work towards this and tell me what you want to do here and do this research and then come back to me. And so I remember a meeting with you every month or so. To get through those steps and pool global global core is a great up, you know, a fantastic resource to us now. I don't think I remember using quite a whole lot. I remember meeting more with advisors. But that's a fantastic opportunities. Well, To speak with students who have been here, which I thought would have been, you know, I wish I could have done that in in spoke more of students who said like, hey, I went there. This is what I saw. This is what I did is what I recommend is what I don't recommend So those are the things I would recommend they worked for me, but they may not work for everyone, but that's just how I went about it.

Ellen Frost: Yeah. Awesome. So kind of a little bit along the same lines. What advice would you have for students who are kind of unsure of where to start. So maybe they might know they want to say abroad or even they might be on the fence about that, but like, where would you advise them to just begin this journey of planning to study abroad.

Nick Sather: So I think obviously I think every students who study abroad. I think it's and, you know, I don't think it can hurt you in any way. You know, maybe if you grew up, like in a Maybe like a super sheltered, type, type area. And it's, you know, your home five mile radius is all you knew that can be challenging. And that can be difficult. But I think it can only really help anyone grow. And starting out, looking at where you want to study abroad or even if you can study abroad I would figure out First, if you want to study abroad decide that, because once you want to study abroad and you want to commit to study abroad, you can always find, you know, you can almost always work away around it to make yourself, you know, capable of doing so. So I guess you know academically would be the first thing that would kind of hold you back if you if you couldn't study abroad so figuring that out obviously meeting with an advisor. See if capable of not, can you know how, what can you do to become capable to study

abroad. And then, I guess, taking steps to, you know, from then once you're able to sorry academically. Is it start kind of researching what the best options like what are you looking for. Are you looking for more of a trip. That's kind of with local you know your people that you're around at NC State. Will go more of an educational and fun experience that you can look back on. Or you looking, you know, are you learning something to Are you looking for something that you can really, really great yourself. And that's more you know, the latter is more of a studying abroad for a semester or even longer, like the Alexander Hamilton program or the dual degree program or something like that.

Ellen Frost: Absolutely. It's gotta last question, looking back at your own study right experiences. What are some of the favorite memories are lessons that you learned you mentioned, you know, everybody should study abroad. If they can What are some of your favorite times from your experiences abroad.

Nick Sather: I think the biggest lesson so sorry for the, the biggest lesson I learned By far. I think it's The biggest lesson I learned was learning to be comfortable in the uncomfortable so constantly being you know going abroad to Spain. Is Spain isn't you know as drastically different as you know maybe China is or something like that. But, but, you know, you're still regardless. He still thousands of miles away from any relatives or any friends or family. And so a lot of times, you know, I had to learn how to figure stuff out for myself. And I think that's a valuable lesson on, you know, I didn't really know how to cook before and now I'm like, I consider myself the best cook in my apartment. Learning how to cook wells in Spain. So I guess really being comfortable in the uncomfortable and learning how to adapt to those like situations where like things might not always go as planned. You know, when we were traveling. One time we had a flight that was booked three days. Further than we had expected. And so we didn't have a flight. The flight the morning that we thought we had a flight you know it's and then figuring out, okay, well, what can we do from there because, you know, my parents are asleep. My we know You know, I got no one to call, whatever. So what can I, what can I do, and that kind of, it's, it's also experienced that helps you grow as a person, but you know also You know, is applicable to you know jobs or other opportunities that you might go through later in life, which you will go through, you know, regardless, so And then I don't know my favorite memory is probably like traveling to Hospitals. Hospitals is something that I'd never experienced and I fell in love with him after the first or second one. My favorite one, I think, was a by company called one hostile like spelled out. Oh, and he and I have a handful hospitals. throughout different areas in in Barcelona and Madrid and Paris in London. But they're more of a home style hostel where you you live with like 40 people inside this kind of big air at this building. But everyone, for the most

part, speaks English, some don't. But It really allows you to it allowed me to meet people from like literally all walks of life. So I remember having dinner they serve you free dinner where everyone met at a dinner table and I met the person to the left of me was from New Zealand and the person to the right of me was from one did the person across from he was from California from Palo Alto and, you know, and he was A Spanish minority who who got a full ride scholarship to go to Stanford and was at currently studying at MIT to get is like masters, I believe. And so I was like What is going on around me like I'm just meeting, like, you know, we're connecting we're all having dinner together, you know, in the table with people that I would have never met or even thought I couldn't meet so And that was, that's fine so valuable.

Ellen Frost: Yeah, absolutely. And I've had similar experiences and heard from students as well that you not only when you study abroad meet people who are from the country that you're at But you also get a chance to meet people from all over the world, whether it's through meeting him at hospitals or in classes. It's a really cool aspect of studying abroad so well. Thanks so much for joining us today. Sharing us a little bit about your own experiences studying abroad and how you made that possible, appreciate it.

Outro

I hope this information and conversation with Nick has sparked some questions and thoughts in your mind about studying abroad. There are three easy next steps for you to take to continue researching studying abroad.

1. Explore our website - This information about programs - both summer and semester - how to apply and course planning. You can also see stories and photos of students who have been abroad.
2. Complete Study Abroad 101 - Study Abroad 101 is a short series of videos that outlines the application process and gives more information about resources available. This is actually the first required step of opening up an application and a great place to start.
3. Meet with Poole Global - Meet with our team early on in your planning. We have appointments available daily and are eager to connect with you.

Hopefully you now have a better idea how to plan for study abroad. It's never too early to get started and remember, we're here for you. Thanks for listening to this episode of Global, Here and Now presented by the Poole College of Management at NC State. For more information and to listen to other episodes, please visit our website at go.ncsu.edu/pooleglobal. Stay safe, stay well and stay globally engaged.