

WHEN should you study abroad?

Students have the option to study abroad during their fall, winter, spring, or summer quarters. Typically, study abroad programs offer semester-long options; which either start in August and end in December or start in January and end in May. Some programs also offer year-long programs which Cal Poly students have successfully participated in. Although it is popular for Orfalea students to study abroad in Fall of their junior year, we would encourage you to consider going earlier or in Spring of your Junior year to avoid missing our main recruitment period for internships.

The “best” time will be different for every student; this will depend on your academic progress and the types of courses you want to take abroad. We recommend beginning your planning early (as early as your first year), and saving the following GE areas, which can be easily found abroad: C1, C2, C3, C4, C Elective, D2, D3, D5. You won’t necessarily take all of these GEs abroad, but the more flexibility you have, the better. You are eligible to study abroad as early as your 2nd year.

RECOMMENDED:

- Fall of Sophomore Year
- Winter/Spring of Sophomore Year
- Winter/Spring of Junior Year

PROS & CONS

Time	Pros	Cons
1st year Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get ahead in classes • Do not miss recruiting season • Most classes open to potentially take abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter summer programs • Less accustomed to collegiate lifestyle • Some programs require junior standing
2nd year Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our most recommended quarter to study abroad • More classes open to potentially take abroad • Do not miss recruiting season for third year internship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less accustomed to collegiate lifestyle • Some programs require junior standing
2nd year Winter/Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not miss recruiting season for third year internship • Can stay abroad for a longer period of time • Travel during the summer before school starts • Complete an internship abroad after your program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get behind on degree progress • Some Programs require junior standing
2nd year Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to get ahead in units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss possible internship

<p>3rd year Fall</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More accustomed to collegiate lifestyle • Declared in concentration area – can take concentration courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miss fall recruiting season • Less classes to potentially take abroad due to concentration being declared and degree progress
<p>3rd year Winter/Spring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay abroad for a longer period of time • Travel during the summer before school starts • Complete an internship abroad after your program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning required to find enough courses to meet requirements and complete enough units • Less classes to potentially take abroad due to concentration being declared and degree progress

Things to consider when choosing when to study abroad:

- Summer and Fall are the most popular quarters to go abroad because of the number of units you are able to take to stay on track at Cal Poly.
- If you are interested in studying abroad in Winter, Spring, or for a full year, make sure to make an appointment with the Orfaea Peer Advising Team to ensure you can enroll in enough units to make academic progress.

Full Academic Year:

- Students are often reluctant to consider going abroad for a full year because they worry they will miss out on time here with their friends. The most common sentiment we hear from students who return after one semester is that they wish they had gone abroad for longer. Studies show that the longer a student studies abroad, the more integrated in the culture they become, and the more impactful their experience is. Some of our year long programs offer extensive business curriculum, internships, state and federal financial aid, and are comparable cost wise to studying at Cal Poly for one year. Additionally, you will make plenty of lifelong friends abroad and your Cal Poly friends will be here when you return, so definitely consider it.

Spring Semester (January – May/June):

- Students often worry about going abroad for Spring Semester because it spans both winter and spring quarters here at Cal Poly. The common concern is that you won't be able to take enough units to make academic progress. In a typical Spring Semester program, you would take between 12 – 15 semester units, or 18 – 22.5 quarter units (4– 5 Cal Poly Classes). However, if you do an "early start program," you would take between 18 – 21 semester units, or 27 – 31.5 quarter units (roughly 7 – 8 Cal Poly classes). This would essentially look like two quarters at 12 units and 16 units, or two quarters at 16 units. This requires a little bit of planning but is easily manageable if your program offers early start options.