



Off-Campus Study Expectations

Off-Campus Study is a time for emotional and intellectual maturation. This contract serves to steer you toward successful skill building and away from academic tourism. MCAD makes Off-Campus Study opportunities available to expose students to new and different perspectives on knowledge, artistic creation, socioeconomic contexts, languages, traditions and cultural assumptions. MCAD emphasizes individual responsibility to prepare appropriately for learning Off-campus prior to departure.

During your studies off-campus you will encounter many unfamiliar things. Even in countries with developed economies you should not assume you will find the conveniences and comforts of life equal to Minneapolis or your home. Examples of differences to which you may need to adapt include longer commuting distances between accommodations and classes; a lack of privacy in accommodations; restrictions on bathroom, laundry or water usage; absence or lack of easy access to a telephone or the internet; lack of easy access or no access to word processing or email; unfamiliar foods that you do not like or perceive as unhealthy.

An important part of Off-Campus Study is learning to cope with these differences and MCAD expects that you make an effort to adapt. MCAD does not make a practice of intervening with host institutions or local authorities on behalf of students who are having difficulties adapting unless there are legitimate reasons.

Learning Attitude:

A successful Off-Campus Study experience hinges almost entirely on your positive predisposition to learn in an unfamiliar academic and social system. It is not expected that you will understand everything immediately. What is expected is that you work hard and maintain an open mind.

MCAD hopes you will be an eager and willing learner. MCAD encourages you to take a proactive approach to learning and engage voluntarily in learning activities that complement the formal curriculum and develop further your artistic and cross-cultural skills. We expect you to be respectful of your hosts, their cultures and mindful of customs that may be different than your own.

Academic Expectations:

You are an ambassador of MCAD and represent higher education in the United States. You are expected to represent these institutions honorably and to strive for academic excellence as if you were enrolled on MCAD's campus.

Whenever possible, MCAD emphasizes immersion in an institutional setting alongside regular degree candidates from your host country. You are expected to duplicate as much as possible the experience of the host country student and MCAD expects the host institution to teach and evaluate you according to the same standards it applies to its own regular degree candidates. You should expect to encounter different teaching styles and will have to adapt to different academic expectations. You should not be surprised if your grades are not as high as you are accustomed to receiving at home, particularly if you have difficulty adapting to your new academic expectations. When you receive your final grade do not confuse effort with performance. Remember that your goal is to build knowledge and competence, not just to earn a good grade.

You are expected to study the host country language and try to use it as a matter of courtesy for routine daily activities such as shopping and while using public transportation.

Remember that excessive travel while off-campus is likely to interfere with your goals. Travel fatigue may affect your academic performance and hinders your ability to meet people and immerse yourself in the rhythms of your local setting. You are expected to observe a regular workweek and undertake long distance travel only during scheduled breaks or holidays.

Preparation for Off-Campus Study:

You are expected to attend individual and group pre-departure sessions designed to facilitate your preparation and for adapting to living and studying abroad. Attendance is mandatory. Important information is provided in MCAD's resources and it is assumed you will give them priority.

You are also individually responsible for preparing yourself for study abroad at the site you have selected. This means devoting personal time to reading, viewing films, studying language and similar activities appropriate to becoming as well informed as possible about the culture, norms, language and history of your host institution and country.



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Academic Policies

Attendance:

You are expected to attend class, work on projects or work in your studio, classrooms, library, galleries, museums or accommodations regularly. Be prepared and participate in discussions. Absences may be excused but normally only for legitimate medical reasons. Absence due to travel or visitors, including family, is not excused.

Grades:

Grades earned during Off-Campus Study are included in a students' MCAD grade point average and credits are transferred as given by our host institution. If a conversion from the British or European credit system to U.S. need to take place your Department Chair will sign off on all paperwork.

Grades earned during Off-Campus Study are based on academic performance as judged by individual instructors according to local practice with the exception of the Florence Honors Program. Grades earned off-campus may be appealed through a process determined solely by the host institution and only if such a process exists. The MCAD appeals process does not apply.

Unlike MCAD faculty, instructors at your host institutions are not obliged to report grades within a limited time frame. You are hereby alerted that your official transcript reflecting your academic performance abroad may take up to six months or more to reach MCAD and that MCAD has no power to influence that process. You may miss the possibility of being included on the dean's list because grade calculations during your semester off-campus will not be processed in time.

Course Load:

You are normally required to carry a full-time course load defined as a minimum of 12 U.S. credits while studying Off-campus. At some host institutions the number or courses that constitutes a full-time course load may be different than at MCAD due to differences in the academic calendar or course weighting. If, for example, a full-time load is three or five or six courses per term you will be required to observe the local regulations even if MCAD's normal requirement is higher or lower. Before leaving MCAD you are responsible for knowing the required number of courses and credits that you must take abroad and approximately how much MCAD equivalent credit will be awarded by discussing this with your department chair and MCAD's international student advisor. The maximum equivalent credit that may be awarded for a semester abroad without incurring additional tuition charges is 18 credits.

Registration, Add/Drop and Withdrawal:

In most cases registration for specific courses takes place on site at the host institution after consultation with the local staff and instructions upon arrival.

When studying off-campus the rules for dropping and adding new courses or withdrawing from a course may differ than the rules at MCAD. In many programs you are not permitted to withdraw once you have registered and begun attending a course. Some programs may grant permission in exceptional circumstances. Before making adjustments to your course schedule, you are subject to the policies of the host institution. The host institution is under no obligation to grant a withdrawal especially when it is apparent that a student has done no work in a course.

Unfinished Work:

You are expected to complete all assigned work before leaving the off-campus site at the end of the term or semester. You must have written permission to leave the site before completing all of your academic obligations. Under no circumstances is a student allowed to completely withdraw from a program without prior approval of MCAD's international student advisor in consultation with the host institution. Filing to do so will result in a failed semester and no refund of paid tuition or fees charged. No MCAD studio or facilities access will be granted to a returning Off-Campus Study student without enrollment in a summer class for credit or approval of the shop coordinator.