



Talking To Your Parents about Study Abroad

Studying abroad can be an extremely beneficial experience but it can be a big decision, not just for you, but for your parents as well. It may seem challenging to talk to your parents about studying abroad, so below are some suggestions for how to prepare and facilitate this discussion.

Do Your Research

Start looking into specific programs. Meet with a Programs Abroad Peer Advisor or do research on your own to narrow down your choices. Don't base your choices on where your friends are going - do what's best for **you**, your **studies**, and your **career goals**. Don't limit yourself, you have choices all over the world! It is important to give your parents as much information as possible. Focus on the benefits of studying abroad, like how it will distinguish your resume, help you become fluent in another language, and gain hands on research experience. Gather program information, statistics, or articles that you can show your parents and let them read for themselves how beneficial studying abroad can be. In addition to learning about the advantages of going abroad, your parents will also see that you are serious about the opportunity.

Approaching the Topic

Broach the topic slowly. Catch your parents in a good mood before you jump right into telling them your big plan. You could start by asking them about their travel experiences or start the discussion of studying in Italy over a big Italian meal that you cooked for them. The important thing is to get a sense of their feelings regarding travel before you tell them directly about your plans. You know your parents best, so think about what approach will work for them.

Maturity

Keep calm and have a discussion, not an argument. Listen and acknowledge the objections or concerns they have, even if they do not seem reasonable to you at that moment. Do not expect them to make a decision immediately.

Compromise

Allowing some flexibility is especially useful if you want your parents to feel like they get to play a role in your decision making process. Listen to their reasons for asking you to compromise and be willing to have a discussion with them about your goals and why you want to go. Perhaps discussing openly and honestly will be enough for them to reconsider. If not, think about alternate locations where you could accomplish your goals.

Safety Comes First

Safety while traveling abroad is a very real concern, and whether or not they admit it, it is often a parent's main concern when it comes to their child studying abroad. Provide them with health and safety information you have researched about the program and destination. If you are having a hard time, try contacting your Programs Abroad Advisor. They may have more resources they can provide to both you and your parents.

Finances

Another concern of many parents is how you (or they) will pay for a study abroad program. Show your parents that you can be financially responsible and they will feel much more comfortable sending you off to a foreign country.

- 1. Create a Budget!** Create a budget that includes the cost of roundtrip airfare, daily meals, public transportation, study abroad fees, passport & administrative fees for your program. It should also include extracurricular activities outside of the academic program including shopping, weekend trips, and other miscellaneous activities you may want to enjoy while abroad.
- 2. Start Saving!** If you start building your own savings, studying abroad could have less of a financial burden on your parents. Don't forget to apply for scholarships!
- 3. Get a Job!** It is the first step to not just telling, but **SHOWING** your parents you're serious about your study abroad program.

Resources

Call in some reinforcements. When your parents say they need to think about it, let them—but you also can email them some additional information in the meantime.

- "Parent's Guide to UCEAP" (ieo.ucsc.edu/Programs-Abroad/resources-hub/Parent-Guide-to-EAP.pdf)
- UCEAP Parent Guide (eap.ucop.edu/ForParents)

Questions Often Asked by Parents

You do not need to have all the answers right away but understanding how to answer the following questions is a good sign that you are ready to start the discussion of studying abroad.

- Is it safe?
- How much does it cost?
- How much spending money is needed?
- How will we/you pay for it?
- Shouldn't you be concentrating on your studies?
- Will all grades/credit be accepted back at UCSC?
- Is this going to delay your graduation?
- How long is the program?
- What are the housing options?
- How can we keep in touch while you are abroad?
- Why would you want to put your parents through this process?

UCSC STUDY ABROAD

Division of Global Engagement
Classroom Unit Building, Room 101
(831) 459-2858
studyabroad@ucsc.edu

studyabroad.ucsc.edu

