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## Student Perception of Barriers to Study Abroad

Jessica Walker  
*University of Central Florida*

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# STUDENT PERCEPTION OF BARRIERS TO STUDY ABROAD

by

JESSICA WALKER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Marketing  
in the College of Business Administration  
and in the Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Carlos Valdez, Ph. D.

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## **Abstract**

Studying abroad during the collegiate experience is an idea sought by the many high school seniors and college freshmen alike. The social, intellectual, and cultural benefits received from participating makes it a seemingly easy decision. Yet, lack of action plagues the nation as there exists a miniscule number of students who follow through with their desire to study abroad. Prior research exemplifies that students rely on the perceptions of their peers and family when approaching an unfamiliar subject. These perceptions result in concocted barriers that dissuade the student from participating in study abroad before they seek concrete information. There are a limited number of studies completed at universities to identify these specific barriers. Thus, this research examines the student population at the University of Central Florida, the perceived barriers they possess concerning study abroad, and their sources of these perceptions. This is a qualitative and quantitative study that investigates the effects of perceived cost and graduation delay on the willingness of a student to study abroad. The unexpected ramifications of the marketing mix, utilized by the department of Study Abroad, will shed light upon the steps necessary to revise their position in order to transform student intent into action.

## **Acknowledgments**

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Thank you to Denise Crisafi for making what at first seemed like an overwhelming venture become achievable and providing the initial encouragement for me to step out of my comfort zone and pursue this study. Thank you to Dr. Keith Folse who inspired a direction for my research and a true moment of clarity when this began. Thank you to Dr. Carolyn Massiah for volunteering your expertise within the field. Last but certainly not least, I wish to thank the department of Study Abroad who dedicated their time to aid in the construction of the focus groups and surveys by contributing their invaluable insight and helping to acquire participants for the studies. It is my hope that this research will benefit the department sufficiently in return for your assistance.

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## **Introduction**

Forty-eight percent of high school seniors in the United States reported that they expected to study abroad at some point during their collegiate experience (Rust et al., 2008). This is not surprising due to the wide breadth of proven benefits of studying abroad. Ranging from the practicality of enhancing students' resumes by preparing for the rapidly increasing globalization of today's business world (Stroud, 2010) to the glamour of experiencing another culture firsthand and exploring a country far from home.

However, according to NAFSA: Association of International Educators, approximately 1% of all university students in the United States are following through with that desire (Gordon et al., 2014). In fact, despite its wealth and international influence, the United States is 15<sup>th</sup> in the world for number of students studying abroad, a devastatingly low ranking (OECD, 2011). Due to this position, in 2005 NAFSA created the goal of having one million American students studying abroad annually by the academic 2016/2017 year. Unfortunately, as of the 2013/2014 academic year, the number participating reached only 289,408 students and experienced a slower growth rate than the previous year. According to the Open Doors 2014 report, there exists more than three times as many students from foreign countries studying in the United States as there are American students studying abroad (Open Doors, 2014).

With such distressing data and greater pressure than ever to produce students competitive for a global economy, educators are continuously faced with the question- if these students possess the initial intent to study abroad and have a variety of programs available to them, why are so few students taking advantage of it?

## **Research Question**

This study will focus its research on the undergraduate student body of the University of Central Florida (UCF). As one of the largest universities in the country, UCF possesses a diverse population of over sixty thousand students. Much like other undergraduate institutions in the United States, UCF struggles to transform student intent to study abroad into action. Many misconceptions transpire concerning study abroad causing students to become discouraged and abandon their ambition without pursuing further information. The purpose of this study is to discover what is keeping students at UCF from accomplishing this desire and therefore, the research will ascertain which perceived barriers prevent UCF students from following through with study abroad.

## Purpose and Significance

In today's progressively global economy, employers seek applicants adaptable to change and conscious of diversity (Joiner, 2004). One in every six jobs in the United States is tied to international trade (NAFSA, 2005). Friedman (2007) states that "*Every young American today would be wise to think of himself or herself as competing against every young Chinese, Indian, or Brazilian.*" (pg. 278) However, when compared to the majority of the United States' international trading partners, Americans speak fewer languages, exhibit less interest in other cultures, and are generally less knowledgeable in how to handle foreign social interactions (Adler, 2002). Americans are privileged that their native language is considered the universal business language, however, this also works to their disadvantage as many do not pursue a second language for this very reason. When compared to ERASMUS students in Europe, the language skills of American students are substantially less. A survey distributed to ERASMUS students revealed that 97% were proficient in at least two languages, 75% demonstrated moderate competence in three or more languages, and 31% spoke four or more (Otero et al., 2006).

A multitude of benefits are attributed to studying abroad. Academic performance, retention, and persistence are skills obtained through studying abroad that are exemplified immediately (Sutton and Rubin, 2004). Increased intercultural competency (Twombly et al., 2012), capability to comprehend moral and ethical issues, communication skills, and overall satisfaction are identified as college outcomes of studying abroad (Luo, 2013). Additionally,

students who study abroad are more likely to participate in civic engagement and philanthropic efforts (Paige et al., 2009).

Recognizing the consumer behavior patterns of UCF students will aid the development of a marketing plan to destruct the myths and misinformation that diffuse amongst students and fortify perceived barriers to study abroad. This research is significant because by understanding which barriers most obstruct UCF students' aim to study abroad, a recommendation can be provided to the UCF Study Abroad Marketing Department. These findings can assist other universities across the nation suffering from similar plagues of misconception.

## Literature Review

Many of the perceived barriers as well as student motivations to study abroad are a result of attitude formation. Attitudes are harbored in memories that are continuously preserved until automatically drawn to the surface due to a related circumstance (Olson and Zonna, 1993). How students feel towards studying abroad can be a sum of past experiences and influences subconsciously collected over a lifetime. A study by Nyaupane (2010) brought to light the differences between inner-directed and outer-directed attitude formation and its effect on student selection of destination for study abroad. Nyaupane (2010) discovered that while inner-directed motivations such as international travel, escape, and academics play a part in attitude formation; when approaching an unfamiliar situation like studying in a foreign country, attitudes are more reliant on outer-directed values by heightening their cognitive function and contingent on the experiences of others. Thus, Nyaupane (2010) found that student pre-trip attitude formation was most swayed by the outer-directed value of social motivation.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, this formed attitude combined with subjective norms (perceived social pressure) and behavioral control (the difficulty level in executing the behavior) interact to create intentions that ultimately become behaviors (Presley, 2010). Presley's research supported her hypothesis that these three attributes influence student intentions to study abroad. In addition, this study demonstrated the most prevalent concerns of students to be cost and availability of financial aid and that students most strongly weighed the opinions of parents and future employers when making the decision to study abroad. A study conducted by Hamir (2011) reinforced this finding by investigating where students receive their

information and encouragement to study abroad, finding that family and friends were the highest while university faculty was “disturbingly low” in comparison.

A study by Hackney (2012) revealed that a student’s willingness to study abroad long-term was positively correlated with their perceived benefit of the program, their level of self-efficacy, having family or friends with international experience, and having previous personal international experience. Hackney identified a negative correlation for students having committed personal relationships domestically.

Risk propensity was also recognized as a significant factor of a student’s likelihood to study abroad. It was determined that students with high risk propensity had a greater desire to study abroad but that this propensity was not sufficient if the student did not perceive a high career value from studying abroad. These two combined factors held true regardless of gender, age, or foreign language skills (Relyea et al., 2008). This study implicated that the perceived risks need to be portrayed as manageable in order to increase student likelihood to study abroad.

Aspects of student personality such as openness and tolerance of ambiguity play important roles in a student’s decision. Those who are more open and possess a higher tolerance to ambiguity are those more likely to participate in study abroad (Joiner, 2004). Likewise, Goldstein and Kim (2005) found students with low levels of ethnocentrism and prejudice along with high levels of language interest had more favorable expectations of study abroad.

Similar research conducted with undergraduate students at a university in New Zealand found the most obtrusive perceived barriers to be the cost of studying overseas, leaving friends and family, preferring to finish their undergraduate degree first, and the obstacle of studying in a

language other than English. Forty-six percent of students expressed the attitude towards cost of studying overseas that they would not be able to afford it because it would be far too expensive and 57% percent had the attitude that they did not know enough about studying abroad. Almost a third of the students possessed the attitude that studying abroad would interrupt their degree and negatively affect their academics by causing them to lose up to a year of schooling (Doyle et al., 2010). Spiering found comparable results that students who chose not to study abroad still believed it to be beneficial but were unwilling to sacrifice the time and money in distress it would delay their graduation (Spiering and Erikson, 2006). A study at York University found that cost, curriculum restrictions, and inadequate support to be the most opposing barriers to study abroad for their students (Trilokekar et al., 2011). In a comparison of American students verses those in France and China, Sanchez (2006) found that all students possessed familial, financial, psychological, and social barriers towards studying abroad though for each nationality these barriers were associated with different denotations and intensities. Joiner's (2004) study on personality also found that the most common perceptions of drawbacks associated with study abroad to be lack of financial support (more than half of students responded with this perception) and administrative difficulties, which included acquiring a Visa and finding equivalent subjects of study, indicated by almost a third of students.

Loberg (2012) created a visual pyramid representation of the factors leading to participation in study abroad in which barriers such as myths, perceptions, and financial constraints were the foundation of the pyramid. This indicates that without the destruction of these barriers, participation will be unable to progress (Loberg, 2012).

When studying consumer behavior, it is important to understand the current consumer profile. The 2014 Open Doors Report paints a picture of the typical student participating in study abroad from the United States. More than 53% of these students study within Europe. Over 60% of students attend a program of eight weeks or less. Social Sciences, Humanities, and Business majors comprise the largest fields of study for students participating in study abroad with nearly 20% of participants in each field, while in comparison only 8% of participants are engineering majors. This is attributed to the fact that most STEM majors consist of numerous required courses that are scheduled in a rigid manner with almost no flexibility (NAFSA, 2005). More than 76% of study abroad participants in the United States are Caucasian and over 65% of participants are female. These figures have remained relatively constant over the past several decades. Over time it has become increasingly obvious that solely diversifying programs to study abroad by creating additional destinations and fields of study will not attract minority and male students, hence, research must be conducted as to which factors inhibit their decision to study abroad to ensure any real progress (ASHE, 2012). Salisbury (2010) conducted a study regarding the factors that influenced African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic students to study abroad in comparison to White students. It was concluded that these factors differed in strength and positive/negative correlations amongst the races. For example, while a factor such as “aspire to graduate degree” had a negative effect on white students’ intent to study abroad, it encouraged intent in minority students in varying degrees. Salisbury (2010) induced the same analysis upon the gender gap to discover the differences in factors on intent to study abroad between the male and female populations. The study demonstrated that parent education had a significant impact on females’ intent to study abroad while it had no significance with males. According to

Salisbury (2010) this may be due to either females holding their parents opinions in higher esteem or the greater autonomy in decision making given to male children by their parents. Men exhibited a negative impact on intent if they were involved in high-school extracurricular activities, though with women it did not contribute any impact. While having an openness to diversity has positive impact on both sexes, it was a much stronger impact with male correspondents. Attending a regional institution or community college rather than a liberal arts college had a significantly negative impact on women, but not on men. This speculates that the environment at regional institutions and community colleges is somehow inhibiting women's intent to study abroad. Men who were undecided in their major had a significantly greater intent to study abroad whereas women exhibited no impact. Salisbury (2010) indicated that colleges forcing male students to adopt a major too abruptly may be prohibiting their initial intent to study abroad. These differences in perception and barriers are important to note before proceeding with the study.

**Table 1: Notable barriers found by relevant research and literature**

<b>Literature</b>	<b>Subjects Observed</b>	<b>Most Common Barriers Observed</b>
Hackney et al., 2012	Undergraduate business students at a public Midwestern university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Separation from spouse/child/significant other</li> </ul>
Doyle et al., 2010	Five New Zealand tertiary institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of studying overseas</li> <li>• Leaving family/friends</li> <li>• Prefer to finish degree first</li> <li>• Studying in a language other than English</li> </ul>
Spiering and Erickson, 2006	Undergraduate students at a medium-sized Midwestern university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of delaying graduation</li> </ul>
Trilokekar et al., 2011	First and second-year undergraduate students at York University in Toronto, Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Curriculum restrictions/Delay of graduation</li> <li>• Inadequate support</li> </ul>
Sanchez et al., 2006	Business students in the United States, France, and China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familial</li> <li>• Financial</li> <li>• Psychological</li> <li>• Social</li> </ul>
Taylor et al., 2001	Young adult college students and a major southeastern university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year of study</li> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Time/Delay of graduation</li> </ul>
Lincoln Commission Report, 2005	Students in the United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial</li> <li>• Lack of awareness</li> <li>• Perception of unimportance</li> <li>• Familial and social constraints</li> <li>• Rigid curriculum requirements</li> <li>• Fear of racism for minority students</li> </ul>

The prior research conducted edifies the process in which these perceptions of study abroad are created by students and furthermore, some of the most predominant barriers perceived in similar studies. This study aims to discover which barriers are perceived by UCF students as a result of their formed attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards study abroad.

The literature review was able to identify how students are creating barriers through the process of attitude formation and their tendency to rely more strongly on the opinions and experiences of others when confronted with a foreign situation. Without first understanding how these perceptions are constructed, the research would be unable to demolish them.

By finding common barriers demonstrated by other universities' students, this literature review developed a groundwork from which to build. Discovering the differences in perception by minority students and between male and female students along with the current consumer profile enables this research to better understand its target market and its varying patterns in consumption.

The literature review highlighted cost and fear of delaying graduation as the most prominent barriers which helped to develop the corresponding hypotheses. However, all aforementioned barriers will all be examined within the survey and focus groups. Using these tools, the research will explore which barriers UCF students perceive that most obstruct them from studying abroad.

## **Hypothesis**

The first hypothesis of this study is that UCF students are most likely to not study abroad due to the perception that it is unaffordable. This includes the belief that debt due to loans acquired to study abroad for the additional costs of flights, housing, passports, etc. are imminent and unavoidable. This study will seek the perceived total cost of studying abroad by UCF students, the perceived likelihood of needing a loan and the likelihood of receiving scholarships. This hypothesis is supported by previous research conducted at universities in New Zealand and Canada that found cost to be the largest hindrance to student participation (Doyle et al., 2010; Trilokekar et al., 2011). The Lincoln Commission Report also identified this as the greatest obstacle to overcome in order to reach one million American students studying abroad (NAFSA, 2005).

The second hypothesis states that the other largest barrier for UCF students to study abroad is the perception that they will be unable to complete their degree on time due to a lack of courses offered abroad within their major. It is hypothesized that STEM majors are most susceptible to this belief. Fear of delaying graduation is continually quoted in prior studies as a barrier to study abroad participation (Doyle et al., 2010; Spiering and Erickson, 2006; Taylor et al., 2001; NAFSA, 2005). Due to the limited flexibility in STEM majors' academic plans, they are particularly vulnerable to this fear (NAFSA, 2005).

The final hypothesis regards where and from whom these students receive information regarding study abroad to formulate their perceived barriers, and it is hypothesized that students are more likely to form attitudes based on the reviews and opinions of friends and family who

have studied abroad rather than seek out factual evidence regarding the expenses of time and money from UCF services such as the departments of Financial Assistance or Study Abroad. This hypothesis is due to the fact that students rely more heavily on the experiences of others when forming attitudes about an unfamiliar subject (Nyaupane, 2010).

## **Definition of Terms**

The term study abroad can possess a myriad of meanings depending on the institution. There are many variations of programs with differing durations and academic value. In the University of Central Florida, both short-term and long-term exchanges exist; some with faculty accompaniment, some for pleasure, some for internships, and the list continues. For the purpose of this paper, the term study abroad will indicate a program of at least one semester in length, in which the student receives academic credit towards their major.

## **Methodology**

This study will examine which perceived barriers are preventing the transformation of UCF students' intent to study abroad into action. It is hypothesized that the two most obstructive barriers to students will be the perceptions that is unaffordable without accruing debt and that studying abroad will delay their graduation date due to the unavailability of required classes for their major, and that STEM majors will be more susceptible to the latter. In addition, it is hypothesized that students form these attitudes about barriers to study abroad in most part due to the experiences and opinions of friends and family rather than seeking factual evidence from the university concerning the necessary costs and curriculum.

After distributing an online survey to nearly seventy University of Central Florida students to serve as a pilot study, the results were analyzed to prepare discussion topics for the next step of conducting focus groups. The participants in this study were male and female undergraduate students at the UCF with a diverse mix of majors. The focus groups were advertised via social media outlets, by several professors in the marketing department, and by the Burnett Honors College. In addition, the UCF Study Abroad office advertised the focus group to any student who previously studied abroad or ever created an application (either partially or fully) on their website indicating they had interest in the program. After collecting applicants, two focus groups were formed within a period of a week with nine to eleven participants in each. The students were a blend of those who studied abroad, want to study abroad, or used to want to study abroad. The focus groups were held for approximately an hour in the university's library. The focus groups were recorded for the sole purpose of preparing this thesis and all participants

delivered their consent to be filmed. The students were questioned about their perceptions of study abroad and its affordability, feasibility to graduate on time, access to information, and other barriers.

Furthermore, an online survey created through UCF Qualtrics was distributed to students to examine their perceived barriers and obtain a more extensive number of student responses. The responses of the focus groups and survey were analyzed to learn which barriers are the largest contributors in preventing student action to study abroad and to draw conclusions about the aforementioned hypotheses.

## **Results**

### Pilot Study Results

A pilot study in the form of an online survey was distributed and completed by 43 undergraduate students from UCF in which 81% of participants were female and 90% were Caucasian. The majority of participants were upperclassmen, 35% junior standing and 49% seniors.

Nearly 70% of participants agreed to some level that they entered college with the intent to study abroad and 83% felt that studying abroad would be beneficial to them academically and socially. Students were presented with several statements concerning their perceptions of costs to study abroad and asked to respond using a likert scale which valued their responses between 1 and 7 (1 being strongly disagree and 7 being strongly agree). Later, these students were provided facts about UCF's study abroad fees, scholarships, as well as an example of an engineering study abroad program for a semester in Hong Kong's costs. They were then asked the same questions concerning their perceptions a second time. The students' perceptions changed and they generally found studying abroad to be more affordable, perceived they would be less likely to need loans, and more likely to receive scholarships to assist their endeavor.

A similar strategy was used when questioning students on the feasibility of studying abroad academically. Students were first asked about their perceptions, then given facts regarding UCF programs and asked to answer a second time. However, this time the facts generally decreased students' perception of feasibility to study abroad. This may be due to large number of respondents in the College of Health and Public Affairs (21% of participants) and the

College of Sciences (31%). Currently, UCF study abroad offers academic credit for eight fields of study during exchanges which are: business, communication, engineering, hospitality, political science, math, English, and foreign language. Out of the 52% of participants in either College of Health and Public Affairs or College of Sciences, only two majors currently receive credit through study abroad which may have been discouraging to a number of students responding to the survey. This was an enlightening demonstration in the pilot study which ensured that a more diverse group of majors were questioned in detail during later focus groups to identify if this is the root cause of the barrier.

When it came to social obligations, nearly half of participants agreed to some level that they would miss their family and friends too much if they studied abroad. Over 40% agreed they had too many familial or relationship obligations to study abroad and more than 58% had too many extracurricular obligations for it to be possible.

Students were questioned where they received their information concerning study abroad. Over 80% of participants agreed that they were informed about studying abroad from family and friends' experiences. Only 43% had been to a meeting with a member of UCF faculty to learn more about studying abroad and a little more than one third of participants had attended a study abroad event or orientation to receive more information. More than 35% of participants considered themselves to be uninformed about studying abroad.

The pilot study provided the insight to create a foundation from which the remaining focus groups and survey of the study were structured. Results of the pilot study support the hypothesis that the majority of students acquire their information and form perceptions

concerning study abroad from the experiences of family and friends, reaffirming Nyaupane's (2010) study on attitude formation.

### Focus Groups

#### **Obstacles to Studying Abroad**

The first focus group began by discussing everyone's major, year of study, and prior experience or interest with studying abroad. Those who used to want to study abroad discussed the various reasons they did not follow through with their desire. These included anything from social commitments such as Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) to owning cats that could not be left alone for a semester. The discussion transitioned into the topic of excess hours. The freshmen and transfer students were relatively unknowledgeable although six of the eleven participants had changed their major at least once and would be in danger of going over their allotted hours if they studied abroad. The second focus group was comprised of nine students, most of whom were contacted by the Study Abroad office. The discussion began with the prompt of defining study abroad at UCF with a single word. A student quickly spoke up with the word "challenging." She explained that the process seemed easier for her friends in other majors and at different universities than it did at UCF for her. The other students pitched in agreeing it seemed challenging partially due to the expense and culture shock associated with studying abroad.

When asked what their greatest obstacle was to study abroad, five of the nine cited finances, two of the nine related it to time, and two said nothing could stop them from studying abroad if they plan ahead. The freshmen in the focus group also mentioned that acclimating to college was a challenge in itself and therefore, it was difficult to even consider study abroad until they were better adjusted. The students agreed they were willing to stay in college an extra semester to

study abroad but almost no one would be willing to sacrifice a full year. Both groups discussed a need for greater transparency during the process so it was clearer to students about costs and other requirements. Currently, students perceive the process as overwhelming and confusing thus, corrective measures should be set in place.

### **Costs of Studying Abroad**

During the first focus group, only one out of the eleven students cited finances as their largest obstacle. When asked to approximate the cost of studying abroad aside from UCF tuition, the guesses were between \$3,000 and \$12,000 with the most common answer being \$8,000. In the second focus group, the students' estimates were anywhere from \$2,000 to \$30,000. These students were then given a price of \$1,000 and asked if they would be willing to pay it to study abroad. Everyone agreed they would so the price increased in \$1,000 increments until the student decided it was unaffordable. A few students became hesitant at \$4,000 and many refused to pay above \$5,000. Those who were left agreed it needed to be less than \$8,000 to consider. Notably, the vast majority of students in both groups agreed that their parents would help them study abroad in some aspect financially. In each focus group, only one student was willing to take out a loan to study abroad. Students discussed fear of debt and came to agreement that the experience was not worth this financial risk. In both focus groups, the students who were largely concerned with the financial hardships of studying abroad were out of state students who pay a higher tuition to attend the university. Both groups had students who discussed out of state friends at other universities who were offered incentives to study abroad, such as in-state tuition while abroad, that would make them more likely to consider the program.

## **Sources of Information**

The next set of questions focused on where students received their information; in the first focus group, only two of the eleven had visited the study abroad office. Only one student had seen an academic advisor about studying abroad due to the fact she had an international engineering minor in which studying abroad is required. The students were asked if their professors ever promoted studying abroad in class which was uncommon for anyone other than students in the Nicholson School of Communications. All students stressed that if academic advisors and professors were promoting study abroad, it would seem more accessible and they would be more likely to take the initiative to talk to a faculty member about it. One student raised her concern that as a transfer student she felt uninformed about studying abroad due to lack of promotion at the community college and her limited number of peers there who had studied abroad. The students had limited recollection of advertisements, campaigns or promotions they had seen about studying abroad during their time at UCF. The students expressed that if they were to study abroad they would want someone accessible to discuss the requirements because they found the website to be confusing and overwhelming. However, several students mentioned a distrust of faculty obtained from previous poor experiences with advising staff. When the second focus group was asked if their professors had promoted studying abroad in class before, the room was relatively silent save for two students who heard it in either art history or a foreign language class. One student complained she was in International Marketing yet had heard no mention of study abroad.

### **Short-term vs. Long-term Benefits**

When asked if they considered studying abroad to be beneficial enough to enumerate on a resume or during a job interview, both groups agreed it could help them to become more prosperous. A student from the second focus group mentioned she obtained several skills that she depicted in a cover letter after studying abroad such as the ability to adapt to an unfamiliar environment and communicating despite a language barrier. Another student who wants to study abroad in the group was surprised to hear these valuable skills, that she had never previously considered, could apply to her desired career in pre-clinical health services. The students were questioned whether they thought they could receive the same benefits from a short-term study abroad program rather than a full semester. In both groups they came to the consensus that they could not. One student discussed her motivation to study abroad is to learn another language and that she would not be able to achieve this during a short-term program. Another student referred to the benefits of a short-term program as "shallow and touristic" and the other students agreed it was viewed as more of a vacation than a full culturally immersive experience.

### **Study Abroad Persona**

The focus groups were challenged to describe the typical student who studies abroad. Both groups depicted the student as a Caucasian with a junior class standing who was most likely studying business, communications, history, art, foreign language or hospitality. The second group was insistent that the student was a female because they considered female students to be more likely to plan ahead and to take initiative; to which even the two male students in the focus group agreed.

### **Location**

Merely three of the eleven students in the first focus group knew the location of the study abroad office. When the others were informed it was in Milican Hall, they provided disgruntled reactions. Both focus groups associated Milican Hall by its long wait times, frustration in the financial aid office, florescent lighting, general displeasure and anxiety. They explained that they try to avoid the building at all costs therefore, none of the students would ever stumble across the study abroad office without specific intent. Those who had visited the study abroad office described the entryway as unwelcoming and with limited signage to attract students towards the department.

### **Student Recommendations**

The students were asked how they believed UCF's department of Study Abroad could attract more participants. They explained that they needed to chance upon it more because college life is too hectic and there exist too many negative perceptions for students to take the initiative to visit the study abroad office. Both groups were emphatic about the need for outreach, and the need to start freshman year with this outreach so that students could begin to plan accordingly as to not endanger themselves with excess hours or other academic limitations. They brainstormed solutions such as tabling outside the student union and areas with high freshmen traffic such as the meal plan dining facilities and the Libra housing community. One student suggested a presence at freshman and transfer orientations. The students highly recommended moving the office into the student union and displaying bold signage to be more welcoming and visible to students.

## Survey Results

Over three hundred UCF students and alumni participated in the online survey. The participants were 76% female and 24% percent male. Twelve percent of respondents were freshmen, 14% sophomore, 20% juniors, 43% percent seniors, and 11% alumni. Fifteen percent of respondents were considered Hispanic or Latino. The racial identities of respondents were 91% White, 4% Black or African-American, and 4% Asian. Eighteen percent of students were transfer students. The survey began by asking students to indicate their interest in studying abroad. Six percent said they were never interested, 52% want to study abroad, 26% of students used to want to study abroad, and 15% had studied abroad. Nearly a third considered themselves not knowledgeable about study abroad, a little over half considered themselves somewhat knowledgeable, and 18% considered themselves very knowledgeable about the topic. Students were then asked to rank between first and fourth place where they receive their information about studying broad. Their options were the study abroad office (which included the study abroad fair and promotions on campus), friends and family, professors and academic advisors, and an "other" option where students could write in additional sources. Friends and family was the most prominent source with a score of 1.90, second was the Study Abroad office with a score of 2.24 closely followed by professors and academic advisors with a score of 2.35. Some of the sources students mentioned in the other category included: online searches, other UCF academic websites, personal experience, guest speakers, and student testimonials. The students were asked during their academic career how frequently they saw either the study abroad office or their professors promoting study abroad between a four point scale where Never was a score of one and Very Frequently was a score of five. Students observed the study abroad office more

frequently promoting their programs with a score of 3.25 while professors had a mean score of 2.66.

To observe how students perceived several locations on campus, they were asked to rate their overall experiences with visiting academic advisors, the student union, and Milican Hall on a five star scale. The student union received the highest rating of 4.14 stars, academic advisors placed second with 3.42 stars, and Milican Hall was last with 3.12 stars. To test their knowledge about the study abroad office, students were given four options of where the department was located and asked to select the correct answer. Seventy percent of students answered correctly with Milican Hall while the remainder of the students thought it was in either Howard Phillips Hall, the Student Union, or Career Services.

Students were then shown four common obstacles to studying abroad cited by students: too expensive, will not be able to graduate on time, family/relationship commitments, and social obligations (ex: ROTC, Greek life, etc.). Students were also given the option to write in their own response and then asked to rank the obstacles one through five, one being the most difficult to overcome. By far, the greatest deterrent was the cost with a mean score of 1.65. The second largest obstacle was the fear of delaying graduation with a mean score of 2.82 followed narrowly behind by family/relationship obligations with a score of 2.90. Social obligations were the least obstructive with a mean score of 3.08. There existed a plethora of other reasons that students provided including: not sure where to start, work obligations (which was the most common write-in response), UCF does not make it easy enough, health issues, afraid to be alone, did not consider until it was already too late, language barriers, pets, excess hours, fear of their GPA

dropping, fear of the unknown, not enough information provided to students, and several variations of credits not transferring or classes not being available for their major.

Next, students were asked how much they believed studying abroad cost in addition to UCF tuition rates. The answers ranged anywhere between zero and \$40,000 with the mean cost being \$6,332. Students were then questioned how much they would be willing to pay in addition to UCF tuition rates to be able to study abroad for the semester. The answers varied between zero and \$20,000 however, many students responded that they would pay whatever it would take (which did not get calculated into the mean score since it is innumerable). The mean price was \$3,237- a little more than half of what the perceived cost was.

Subsequently, students were shown several phrases concerning the cost of studying abroad and asked to agree or disagree on a seven point likert scale; one representing strongly disagree and seven indicating strongly agree. After responding to the three statements, students were shown an example of study abroad costs for a semester in China available to engineering students from the study abroad website in addition to facts about scholarships, Florida Prepaid, and Bright Futures. They were then asked to respond to the same three statements once more to gauge if their perceptions of cost changed. Students originally had a mean score of 4.56 of the perception that they could not afford to study abroad. After viewing the factual prices, this perception scored a 3.74, meaning that student perception that studying abroad is unaffordable decreased by 18%. The original perception that students would need to take out a loan or go into debt to study abroad scored an average of 4.31 which decreased to a score of 3.77 after witnessing the facts. This represents a 12.5% decrease in this perception. The perception that the

student could receive scholarships to help pay for studying abroad had an original mean score of 5.31 and after the facts increased by 9.4% to a score of 5.81.

In a similar fashion, students were provided with four statements concerning academics of studying abroad. They answered on the same seven point likert scale, with strongly disagree awarded one point and strongly agree awarded seven. Afterwards, students were shown facts about the majors that offer academic credit for a semester abroad and the likelihood of needing a foreign language. The perception that students could not graduate on time if they studied abroad was originally a mean score of 4.36 but after seeing the facts changed to 4.17, a 4.4% decrease in the perception overall. The perception that their major did not offer academic credit to study abroad did not change by any significant amount. The fear of needing to know a foreign language to take classes abroad originally received a mean score of 3.42 and decreased by 19.3% after the facts were presented. Students' perception that their major did not have the flexibility to study abroad decreased by 4.5%.

The results of the focus groups and survey were synthesized and conclusions were drawn based on these results. The implications these findings suggest will be considered in the discussion section and recommendations will be made to correct the current hindrances within the department.

## Discussion

The hypothesis of this research was that the greatest obstacle of UCF students to study abroad would be the perception that it is unaffordable and the second greatest obstacle would be the perception that it would delay their graduation, in which STEM students would be more susceptible to the latter. The survey proved the perception that studying abroad is too expensive to be the greatest obstacle as the mean score was 1.65 out of five and more than 63% of participants ranked this as the most difficult for them to overcome. The perception the student would not be able to graduate on time ranked as the second greatest obstacle according to the survey. Approximately 14% of students ranked this as their most difficult obstacle to overcome and this perception had a mean score of 2.82 out of five. While this study was unable to gauge the perceptions of specifically STEM students, 65% of respondents who ranked the inability to graduate on time as their primary obstacle belonged to academic colleges that are science-based with the largest population of 25% being from the College of Sciences. However, 22% of these respondents came from the College of Business Administration which possesses an exchange program where students can receive academic credit towards their major. This may indicate these students are generally unknowledgeable about the existing program.

The hypothesis also stated that students would receive the majority of their perceptions from their family and friends which ranked as the most popular source from the survey, with over 47% students ranking it as a number one, and a mean score of 1.9 out of four.

Although the survey was able to confirm aspects of the hypothesis, this qualitative study shed light on an abundance of factors that deter students from their desire of studying abroad. It

is not merely one obstacle hindering UCF's program, but a conglomeration of many. One of the first concepts a marketing student is taught are the 4 P's of Marketing: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion. By strategically implementing each of these, a successful marketing position can be maintained. This discussion will divide the product of UCF Study Abroad into these four aforementioned categories to consider their associated problems and recommended solutions exhibited by the research.

### Product

While UCF provides many options of where and how a student can study abroad, there are key components that students seek from this product. These attributes include affordability, transferrable credits to allow timely graduation, and a transparent process. The product that should be marketed is not just “study abroad” but a priceless experience in which the student will develop necessary career skills and broaden their horizons during an adventure of a lifetime. With over five hundred extracurricular organizations on campus, students are overwhelmed with opportunities and UCF Study Abroad must compete for their attention. Study abroad must become more than a product sought only by students possessing prior interest, but develop a method of outreach to promote a community of worldly students and a product that is obtainable rather than shrouded in mystery and misguided perceptions.

### Place

To market a product as attainable, the product must be visible to the consumer. The Study Abroad office's current location in Milican Hall is anything but that. The limited signage and negative perception of the building inhibits students from stumbling across the product. In fact,

nearly a third of students who participated in the online survey did not know that the office was located in Milican Hall. Instead, it is recommended that the office is moved to the Student Union. The Student Union scored a 4.14 rating out of five when students judged their overall experience there while Milican Hall was given a score of 3.12 in comparison. This indicates students find experiences in the Student Union to be 25% more enjoyable than their experiences in Milican Hall. As the office of Study Abroad is a primarily student-serving entity, it would be appropriately placed near offices such as Student Government Association and Office of Student Involvement. In addition, the Student Union experiences a tremendous amount of foot traffic and with proper signage could entice students into the office that may not have considered study abroad or thought to visit Milican Hall with their questions.

Another opportunity to make study abroad more visible to students is by implementing consistent tabling outside of the Student Union and other high-traffic locations on campus such as dining halls, the recreation center, and on-campus housing. By demonstrating a presence on campus, the office will be able to create interest in students and provide them with accurate information so they are more equipped to make a decision.

### Price

Since students' greatest perceived obstacle is that studying abroad is too expensive, the department of Study Abroad would be wise to promote its affordability by placing emphasis on the availability of scholarships. By viewing the number of scholarships offered by UCF during the survey, students' perception they could receive scholarships to help them study abroad increased instantly by 9.4%. Furthermore, since the average price students are willing to pay is

\$3,237, students will need to find other means to pay for any additional expenses, and their fear of loans will deter them from that option. Therefore, scholarships could play a vital role in a student's decision to study abroad. During the focus groups students expressed their concern with transparency of the program thus, advertising approximated prices of the programs may eliminate some fear of the necessary expenses rather than leaving it up to the student's imagination. According to the focus groups, another aspect of price that should be considered is providing a discount to out of state students who study abroad. It is suggested that Study Abroad demonstrate examples of how students have afforded the program in the past so that it appears more feasible to potential applicants. The Study Abroad office could also recommend budgeting or savings plans, for example; indicating how the amount of money spent over a semester on dining out could be saved to acquire "X" amount of dollars towards study abroad.

### Promotion

The matter of who promotes studying abroad needs to be addressed. Without a cohesive culture at UCF to promote the program, its success will be limited. Several students stated during the focus groups that they would be more inclined to seek information about studying abroad if it were promoted by the faculty. The focus groups demonstrated that professors were unlikely to mention studying abroad to their students, even when teaching relevant courses such as International Marketing. By educating faculty on the benefits of studying abroad, professors may be more likely to encourage students to apply to the program. It is recommended that the Study Abroad office conducts a brief presentation in large lecture hall classes for direct interaction with their target market. This is a low-cost method of advertisement and will inform students with accurate information in which they can base their decision whether or not to study abroad.

Likewise, as many students are concerned about graduating on time if they study abroad, academic advisors must also be aware of the programs available to their college and able to help students plan their necessary coursework if they were to choose to participate. In addition, students rated their experiences with academic advisors higher than they did their experiences in Milican Hall, therefore, they may consult with advisors before seeking the Study Abroad Office. Students would benefit if these advisors were relatively knowledgeable on the options for students in their college or at least be able to point them in the correct direction for information.

Moreover, it is essential to begin this promotion to students as early as possible. Studying abroad takes foresight and many students failed to participate due to waiting too long into their collegiate career that their coursework was no longer compatible for exchange. By introducing study abroad to students as early as freshman orientation they can begin to consider the program, seek information, and plan accordingly. Other outlets to consider promotion include UCF's Multicultural Academic and Support Services along with the First Generation Program. It is critical to promote to first generation students as their parents are unlikely to have studied abroad and therefore, are not a reference group for them to receive their perceptions.

As students are proven to be more likely to gather their perceptions about studying abroad from friends and family, it may be beneficial for students to have access to testimonials from their peers. Educational luncheons, outreach events, and student panels are all vehicles for students to spread word to their peers and encourage discussion. Another suggestion would involve the creation of an "International Ambassador" program in which passionate students who have studied abroad perform the tabling and outreach events for the Study Abroad office in

exchange for their UCF Study Abroad fee of \$350 being compensated by the department. This is an inexpensive method of hiring seasonal staff to promote the programs rather than allocating current staff time and energy towards the marketing efforts.

## Conclusions

This proposal investigated the topic of student intent to study abroad and its transformation into action within undergraduate universities in the United States. A populous and diverse university such as the University of Central Florida is a prime location to study the barriers inhibiting students from following through with this intent. By first understanding attitude formation, common barriers, and the consumer profile through prior studies, this research moved forward with a concrete base from which to build. A pilot study was able to identify perceptions from a slice of the undergraduate student population at UCF and direct further research towards a more accurate and penetrative study. From this insight, two focus groups were completed in efforts to gain a deeper understanding of student perspective and motives. Finally, a survey was distributed to cater to a broader audience in which more diversified information about the perceived obstacles to study abroad could be analyzed quantitatively.

Based on the research gathered from these methods, the hypothesis that UCF students are most deterred by the perception that studying abroad is unaffordable was proven correct. In addition, the fear of graduation delay was exhibited as the second most common obstacle as the hypothesis predicted. The study was unable to verify whether STEM majors were most susceptible to this belief, and it is recommended that this topic be researched further in the future. Lastly, this study validated the hypothesis that UCF students are most likely to form their perceptions based off the experiences and opinions acquired by friends and family.

However, this study shed light on more topics than the hypothesis predicted. Student concerns were identified within the marketing mix of Study Abroad and the research was able to extract their overall perception of product, price, place and promotion relating to the UCF department. This opens the door to an abundance of potential research to be explored. As this study was primarily a qualitative study, research that investigates the marketing mix of the Study Abroad department and the consumer behavior patterns of UCF students in a quantitative manner can contribute additional information towards the case.

It is suggested that a financial study be conducted about the allocation of "excess" funds by students. For those students that felt they could not afford to study abroad, it is intriguing to learn where any supplemental money is spent- participation in Greek life, dining out, vacation, shopping for new clothing, etc. and could delineate the financial priorities of students. Another recommended topic of investigation would be the correlation between parents' experience travelling and a student's likelihood to study abroad. In addition, it would be prosperous to analyze the effects of community college culture on transfer students' likelihood to study abroad.

This research was conducted in aim to assist the department of Study Abroad at UCF in gaining a more in-depth understanding of their target market so that corrective measures can be taken to inspire a greater number of students to follow through with their intent to study abroad. Nevertheless, the acumen amassed from the study may illuminate solutions to similar dilemmas at other universities across the nation. The United States has a long road ahead before reaching one million students abroad, but it starts at each university by learning more about its consumers

and making adjustments based on their needs. This research is taking one step down that long road to a future with a more internationally competitive and culturally competent generation.

## **APPENDIX A: PILOT STUDY SURVEY**

## Appendix A

This is the survey distributed to undergraduate students at the University of Central Florida, which acted as a pilot study.

My name is Jessie Walker and I am a Marketing major conducting research for my Honors in the Major thesis proposal. This survey is a pilot study to identify which barriers prevent University of Central Florida students from studying abroad.

1. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I entered college wanting to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I still plan to study abroad during my undergraduate degree.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Studying abroad will not be possible before I complete my undergraduate degree.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Studying abroad is beneficial to me socially and academically.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

2. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can't afford to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I will need to take out loans and go into debt to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
There are scholarships I can receive to help me pay for studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

3. How much do you think studying abroad costs IN ADDITION to normal UCF tuition rates?

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

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4. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will not be able to graduate on time if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
They do not offer academic credit for my major to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I am worried I will have to study in a language other than English if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
My major does not have the flexibility to allow studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

5. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will miss my family and friends too much if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I have too many familial/relationship obligations to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I have too many extracurricular obligations to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I fear racism/discrimination in my host country if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

6. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:  
Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I know about study abroad from friends and family with experiences studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I know about study abroad from meeting with members of UCF faculty to learn more about the program.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I know about study abroad from attending events or orientations to learn more about the program.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I am uninformed about studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

You will now be shown several facts concerning UCF study abroad and asked to answer some of the previous questions once more.

7. All study abroad programs vary in cost. However in each, students pay the same UCF tuition as if they were studying in Orlando. The only cost administered by the university is a \$350 Study Abroad fee to pay for administrative support and resources. Bright Futures, Florida Prepaid, and UCF Pegasus scholarships still apply as long as the student is enrolled full-time.

There are 17 UCF Study Abroad scholarships available in addition to Pell Grants and hundreds listed on the UCF Financial Aid website which is updated with opportunities regularly.

Below is an example of the study abroad costs, including UCF tuition, to spend a semester in Hong Kong through the College of Engineering and Computer Science. Please open the link in a separate window and review the costs before answering the questions below.

[https://studyabroad.ucf.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.BudgetSheet&Term=Spring&Program\\_ID=10089](https://studyabroad.ucf.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Programs.BudgetSheet&Term=Spring&Program_ID=10089)>Hong Kong Study Abroad

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can't afford to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I will need to take out loans and go into debt to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
There are scholarships I can receive to help me pay for studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

8. UCF offers approximately 41 study abroad programs, 9 of which hold classes in a language other than English. However, students must first pass a proficiency test to be admitted.

Currently, there are 8 majors that have programs in which a student can earn academic credit studying abroad. These include: business, communication, engineering, hospitality, political science, math, English, and foreign languages.

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will not be able to graduate on time if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
They do not offer academic credit for my major to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I am worried I will have to study in a language other than English if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
My major does not have the flexibility to allow studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

9. What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

10. What is your class standing?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

11. To which college do you belong?

- College of Arts and Humanities
- College of Business Administration
- College of Education and Human Performance
- College of Engineering and Computer Science
- College of Health and Public Affairs
- College of Nursing
- College of Optics and Photonics
- Rosen College of Hospitality Management
- College of Sciences

12. Please specify your ethnicity.

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

13. Please specify your race.

- White
- Black or African-American
- American-Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

**APPENDIX B: SURVEY**

## Appendix B

### Study Abroad - Fall

My name is Jessie Walker and I am a Marketing major conducting research for my Honors in the Major thesis. This survey will be used to learn more about UCF student perceptions about study abroad.

Q1 Please indicate your interest in study abroad.

- Never interested in study abroad
- I want to study abroad
- I used to want to study abroad
- I studied abroad

Q2 How knowledgeable do you consider yourself on the topic of studying abroad?

- Not knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Very knowledgeable

Q3 Please rank where you receive your knowledge about study abroad, 1 being the most prominent.(Drag and drop the statements into the correct order)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Study Abroad office (this includes Study Abroad Fair and promotions on campus)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Friends and family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Professors and academic advisors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Q4 During your collegiate experience, how frequently have you observed these staff members promoting studying abroad?

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Very frequently
Professors	•	•	•	•
Study Abroad Office	•	•	•	•

Q5 Please rate your overall experiences with:

\_\_\_\_\_ Visiting academic advisors

\_\_\_\_\_ Visiting the Student Union

\_\_\_\_\_ Visiting Milican Hall

Q6 Below are common reasons students cite for not studying abroad. Please rank the order you personally perceive these obstacles, 1 being the most difficult to overcome.(Drag and drop the statements into the correct order)

\_\_\_\_\_ Too expensive

\_\_\_\_\_ Won't be able to graduate on time

\_\_\_\_\_ Family/relationship committments

\_\_\_\_\_ Social obligations (example: ROTC, Greek life, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

Q7 How much do you think studying abroad costs IN ADDITION to normal UCF tuition rates?Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

Q8 In addition to the cost of UCF tuition, how much would you be WILLING to pay to study abroad?

Q9 Where is the Study Abroad office located?

- Milican Hall
- Student Union
- Howard Phillips Hall
- Career Services

Q10 Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can't afford to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I will need to take out loans and go into debt to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
There are scholarships I can receive to help me pay for studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Q11 Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will not be able to graduate on time if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
They do not offer academic credit for my major to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I am worried I will have to study in a language other than English if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
My major does not have the flexibility to allow studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Q12 You will now be shown several facts concerning UCF study abroad and asked to answer some of the previous questions once more.

Q13 All study abroad programs vary in cost. However in each, students pay the same UCF tuition as if they were studying in Orlando. The only cost administered by the university is a \$350 Study Abroad fee to pay for administrative support and resources. Bright Futures, Florida Prepaid, and UCF Pegasus scholarships still apply as long as the student is enrolled full-time. There are 17 UCF Study Abroad scholarships available in addition to Pell Grants and hundreds listed on the UCF Financial Aid website which is updated with opportunities regularly. Below is an example of the study abroad costs to spend a semester in Hong Kong through the College of Engineering and Computer Science. This is including UCF tuition, housing, and meals. Please open the link [IN A SEPARATE WINDOW](#) and review the costs before answering the questions below. [Hong Kong Study Abroad](#) Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can't afford to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I will need to take out loans and go into debt to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
There are scholarships I can receive to help me pay for studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Q14 UCF offers approximately 41 study abroad programs, 9 of which hold classes in a language other than English. However, students must first pass a proficiency test to be admitted. Currently, there are 8 majors that have programs in which a student can earn academic credit studying abroad. These include: business, communication, engineering, hospitality, political science, math, English, and foreign languages. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: Note\* Studying abroad is defined as a semester or more spent abroad in which the student receives academic credit.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I will not be able to graduate on time if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
They do not offer academic credit for my major to study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I am worried I will have to study in a language other than English if I study abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
My major does not have the flexibility to allow studying abroad.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Q15 What is your sex?

- Male
- Female

Q16 What is your class standing?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Alumni

Q17 Are you a transfer student?

- Yes
- No

Q18 To which college do you belong?

- College of Arts and Humanities
- College of Business Administration
- College of Education and Human Performance
- College of Engineering and Computer Science
- College of Health and Public Affairs
- College of Nursing
- College of Optics and Photonics
- Rosen College of Hospitality Management
- College of Sciences
- College of Medicine

Q19 Please specify your ethnicity.

- Hispanic or Latino
- Not Hispanic or Latino

Q20 Please specify your race.

- White
- Black or African-American
- American-Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

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