

October 24, 2019

The Institute of International Education (IIE) has released the findings of a new study on graduate student study abroad opportunities, entitled [Who's Counting?: Understanding the Landscape of Graduate Learning Overseas](#). This report is the result of the first national survey of U.S. higher education institutions focusing on graduate student mobility and provides insights into the graduate study abroad landscape and the need for U.S. institutions to build greater capacity to collect graduate student mobility data. It is also the first report in a three-year Graduate Learning Overseas (GLO) research study that began in 2017 and is implemented by the Institute of International Education with support from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of International and Foreign Language Education.

For more information and resources about this report and the GLO initiative, go to <https://www.iie.org/GLO>. IIE will be presenting information from the GLO study in a Webinar during International Education Week on November 19, at the Association of International Education Administrators Annual Conference on February 18, and at a pre-conference workshop at IIE's Best Practices Conference March 19-20.

The survey finds that 3.4% of all students enrolled in U.S. graduate degree programs participated in overseas learning activity in the 2016/17 academic year, including both credit and non-credit programs undertaken by U.S. and international students. Respondents suggested that this is likely an undercount of graduate students who participate in experiential learning opportunities overseas. 70% of these students studied abroad voluntarily, rather than to fulfil a degree requirement. Relative to the total study abroad population, graduate students are more likely to engage in limited- and short-term experiences. 51% of graduate-level study abroad students are in programs of 2 weeks or shorter and 87% are in programs of 8 weeks or shorter.

As with the total study abroad population, business is the top graduate field engaged in overseas learning experiences. Legal professions and studies, public administration, and social service professions are the top study abroad fields distinct to graduate-level studies. China hosts the highest number of graduate students in overseas learning, with the United Kingdom second and Germany third. Mexico, France, India, Italy, South Africa, Spain, and Peru round out the top 10. While the most common form of graduate-level study abroad was coursework or traditional study abroad, substantial numbers of graduate students also engaged in research and field work; travel seminars or study tours; work, co-ops or internships; and volunteering and service learning.

One challenge institutions face when reporting graduate learning overseas data is the extent to which institutions rely on self-reported data or do not collect data at all, especially for activities that do not count for academic credit. This survey highlights the need for greater communications between campus offices to ensure that graduate students on study abroad experiences can be appropriately tracked for institutional risk management and reporting purposes. There is a clear need for institutions to reflect on their data collection processes for graduate learning overseas and develop strategies that can be implemented realistically at their institution to improve cross-campus communication as well as tools for collecting and reporting data on graduate learning overseas.

About the Institute of International Education

Now celebrating its Centennial year, IIE was established in 1919 with the founding premise that international exchange could make the world a more interconnected place. IIE works to build more peaceful and equitable societies by advancing scholarship, building economies and promoting access to opportunity. As a not-for-profit with 18 offices and affiliates worldwide, IIE collaborates with a range of corporate, government and foundation partners across the globe to design and manage scholarship, study abroad, workforce training and leadership development programs. Visit iie.org.

About the U.S. Department of Education Office of International and Foreign Language Education

The Office of International and Foreign Language Education (IFLE) administers Title VI and Fulbright-Hays grant and fellowship programs that strengthen foreign language instruction, area/international studies teaching and research, professional development for educators, and curriculum development at the K-12, graduate, and postsecondary levels. Title VI programs offer domestic grants to institutions of higher education to develop and maintain capacity and performance in area/international studies and world languages. The International Research and Studies Program supports surveys, studies, and development of instructional materials to improve and strengthen instruction in modern foreign languages, area studies, and other international fields.

For more information contact:

Michael Stecher, mstecher@iie.org, 202.918.5966