

Global Affairs' Best Practices Guide to Awarding Study Abroad Scholarships

1. Identify Funds

Determine how much your department/college can earmark for study abroad in advance as well as the source of the funds. The source of funds may impact student eligibility or processing requirements for scholarships.

Once you have identified the total funding, determine the amount per scholarship and how many scholarships you want to provide. Here are some helpful questions to guide this decision:

- Do you want to impact many students minimally? This means your scholarship will have less impact in enabling a student to participate in the program initially but may better their experience in-country.
In this case, award more scholarships under \$1,000.
- Do you want to increase the number of financially conscientious students that study abroad? These are students that might not participate without a guarantee of these funds.
In this case, award less scholarships of more substantial amount – over \$1,000.
 - For these students, it's important to be mindful of program application deadlines. Once a student 'commits' to a program, they are financially responsible for the program costs.
 - Spring Break – November 1
 - Summer – Priority Deadline February 1
 - Fall/Spring Semester – February 15th the previous academic year
- Do you want to incentivize participation in a specific experience?
List the program parameters as part of the eligibility criteria – program name/type, length of time abroad, number of credit hours, etc.

2. Establish Eligibility Criteria

If using WVU Foundation funds, some criteria may already be required. In addition to fund restrictions, the following criteria may be used to determine scholarship eligibility:

- Financial need – this requires confirmation by Student Financial Services. Student financial information is confidential, but SFS can provide confirmation that a student is an aid recipient.
- Major/minor/academic fit for program
- Class standing may be used to prioritize applicants – for example, an upperclassman may be given priority over an underclassman since they have less time to participate before graduation.

- GPA – Education Abroad requires a minimum 2.5 GPA for all programs. Some programs may have higher GPA requirements.

3. Develop Application Process

Students are most likely to complete an application which is clear in its expectations and easy to submit online. Applications can be created using Qualtrics, Google Forms, Wufoo, etc.

Applications can vary in expectations but should only request items that can be fairly used for evaluating a student's eligibility towards the scholarship.

Personal statements may be used to evaluate the academic fit of a program beyond a student's major or minor by providing space for a student to share their experience, personal and professional goals.

4. Clearly Communicate: Award, Application, and Deadline

Available scholarships should be communicated clearly with all stakeholders, including but not limited to eligible students, parents, academic advisors, faculty, and Education Abroad Staff.

Education Abroad can list scholarships online at the link below or on individual program brochures based on applicability.

<https://educationabroad.wvu.edu/scholarships>

Published timelines should include application acceptance, notification of award, and receipt of funds to allow students to make informed decisions related to study abroad program participation.

5. Selection Process

Departments/colleges are encouraged to establish a scholarship selection committee to review applications fairly. Applications should first be reviewed for eligibility and then ranked by strength of application. Students should be notified of the outcome of the application even if funding is not available for their request.

6. Award the Scholarship

Once awarded, departments/colleges should work with their Strategic Business Office to process scholarship awards. It is recommended that scholarships be processed through Dept RSA form through Student Financial Services. This will place a scholarship on the student's account to offset program charges. If a student does not have a balance, a student refund will be generated to the student.

If awards must be processed as a reimbursement to the student upon program completion, students should be provided clear instructions related to documentation needs and timeline for submission and reimbursement.