

Flexibility in Meeting the IGS International Experience Requirement under Covid

Brandeis' first priority, during the pandemic, is to maintain student health and safety. That concern led the university to suspend all study abroad courses originally scheduled for fall. In addition, many individual programs have not been able to confirm if they will operate in the spring. This disruption to international exchange is deeply disappointing for all of you who invested time and energy in deciding on a program abroad. For many, experiencing another country and culture remains a cherished goal.

The cancellation for the fall, and uncertainty for the spring, also raise basic administrative questions for the IGS program and our students. Simply put, how can IGS majors meet the international experience that is required to graduate as an IGS major? Given the realities of Covid, and uncertainty about its duration, we are introducing special provisions for fulfilling the international requirement. These provisions are particularly relevant for rising Juniors, who would normally study abroad in the coming year, but should also be of interest to any rising Seniors who have not yet done so. They are not relevant for students who have a permanent address in a foreign country, and whose deep knowledge of another country satisfies the requirement for an international experience.

1. As our [page](#) on requirements for the IGS major indicates, the international experience is generally satisfied with a study abroad program, but students may substitute an international internship for study abroad. The internship is required to last 100 hours over six weeks with an international organization that is concerned with the central issues of IGS. Because students will now not be physically abroad, it makes less sense to limit an internship to international organizations. Moreover, we take into account the pivot to virtual internships. **As such, we will consider the international experience as satisfied by any internship, of at least 100 hours over at least six weeks, in-person or virtually, and with an international or US-based organization, so long as the organization is concerned with the central issues of IGS.** We ask that you confirm with the study abroad liaison, Lucy Goodhart, that a given internship will meet the requirement. For more information on internships listed with the Hiatt Center, please see the [Handshake](#) site at Hiatt and look particularly at internships listed in the NGO, government, politics and international affairs sector.
2. We also understand that regular internships may be less available at this time. **In light of this, students can meet the international experience requirement through two to three "micro-internships" that together meet the goal of 60 hours of internship work.** See this Hiatt [site](#) for links to micro-internships. These micro-internships, again, can be in-person or virtual and with a foreign or domestically-based organization so long as that organization is concerned with the central issues of IGS. **Once again, you should confirm your plans for micro-internships with Prof Lucy Goodhart. To supplement the micro-internships, the student should also agree on a supplementary international experience "project," with Prof Lucy Goodhart.** That project would involve (a) a one page proposal indicating why a particular media or literary source is of value to understanding another country or culture and the questions that the student hopes to answer from the project (b) 10-20 hours of reading a novel in its original (and foreign) language, reading a blog or newspaper in the original language, or watching a TV series without closed captioning etc and (c) a three page final paper on what the student learned about the culture from that literary/media study.
3. **A student in their junior year can also defer study abroad to spring or summer (and seniors can petition to study abroad in the spring semester if they wish to do so).** For those who want to defer to summer, we will accept any summer program approved by the Office of Study Abroad although, for programs of six weeks or less, we will require a supplementary project similar to the one described in Point 2, although with fewer hours and a shorter final paper. In either case, and whether you are looking at spring or summer, we recommend that you consider different options for programs and countries. As we have seen, individual programs may cancel their offerings in a given country. For those for whom study abroad is a cherished goal, we counsel a willingness to go to countries that you might not previously have considered and to be open to new possibilities.