



Frequently Asked Questions

[Q: What is ISEP and who's involved?](#)

A: ISEP is a worldwide network for international education, consisting of 300 member universities in the United States and 42 other countries. ISEP is a nonprofit membership organization providing affordable study abroad and exchange options for over 37,000 students since 1979.

Each ISEP member university designates a staff member to be the **ISEP Coordinator**. Your on-campus ISEP Coordinator will advise you and help you through the application and placement process. There will also be an ISEP Coordinator at the host university who will help with your academic and housing arrangements, provide an on-site orientation, and serve as your local resource.

The ISEP Staff in Washington, DC evaluate students' applications, make placements, and facilitate the exchange process by serving as the communication link between the ISEP Coordinators in the U.S. and around the world. ISEP also sends the transcript from your host to home university.

[Q: Where can I go?](#)

A: You can study at one of the 142 member universities in the United States. If your university participates in [International-to-International ISEP-Exchanges](#), there are 27 additional countries to choose from. See the [Directory](#) (top right) or [Search for a Program](#) for details.

[Q: What kind of program is ISEP?](#)

A: The ISEP experience is a unique opportunity to really learn about another country through immersion in the host culture. Students are fully integrated in the host university, and typically enroll in the same courses and live similarly to the student of that country. Students on ISEP programs welcome the differences and challenges that life in another culture brings, and have the maturity and flexibility to succeed in a more independent type of study abroad program.

[Q: How much does it cost?](#)

A: ISEP is one of the most affordable ways to study abroad. Please see your international office for details. ISEP has two types of programs with different fee structures:

- [ISEP-Exchanges](#) allow you to pay your regular home university tuition, housing and meal fees, and then take the place of a university student abroad; an international student will take your place at your home university. A non-refundable \$360 placement fee is required with your application.
- [ISEP-Direct](#) programs are only available for certain ISEP destinations, and students pay an affordable, established program fee directly to ISEP instead of exchanging places with an international student. A non-refundable application fee of \$60 is required with your application; a \$500 deposit is required upon acceptance; the program fee is invoiced one month before departure. Please see the [ISEP-Direct sites](#) for complete details.

Additional costs include transportation, ISEP health insurance, visa fees, books, and personal expenses.

[Q: If I am an "international student" currently studying at a US university, am I an International student or US student?](#)

A: Students whose **home university** is in the U.S. are considered "US students" by ISEP for logistical purposes. "International students" on this website refers to any student whose home university is located outside the U.S.

[Q: Am I eligible?](#)

A: ISEP programs are available for students who have completed at least one year of university coursework. Students must also demonstrate the personal maturity needed to study abroad, which is evaluated by your essays and professor recommendations. If you are not a native speaker of the host language, you must also demonstrate proficiency in the language. Your home university may have additional requirements.

[Q: Will I get credit for the classes?](#)

A: When you apply to ISEP, you will list the classes you wish to take. Once you've been accepted to the program, you will follow the procedures at your university to have your classes conditionally pre-approved before you go. After you return, ISEP will send an official transcript to your home institution, and the credits will be transferred according to procedures set by your university.

[Q: Do I have to be fluent in another language?](#)

A: If you speak another language, there are many possibilities awaiting you. To study in the host language with other native students, you should have taken at least 2 years of college-level language courses (or be a native speaker), and feel very comfortable speaking, reading, and writing in that language.

For study in the USA, most universities require proof of English language proficiency through a test such as TOEFL or IELTS. See [English Language Requirements](#) for more information.

For students going to countries besides the USA, there are many options in English and other languages. Use the [Search for a Program](#) feature to find a site with courses in the language you need.

[Q: What can I expect as an ISEP participant?](#)

A: Students should think carefully about what life is like abroad and prepare to integrate into their host university and culture. ISEP benefits include full-time enrollment in the host institution, 19 meals per week or an equivalent stipend, and housing typical to that of other local students. ISEP students receive advising and a predeparture orientation from their home ISEP Coordinator, and an on-site orientation and local support as needed from the host ISEP Coordinator.

[Q: Do I need a visa?](#)

A: For study in the U.S., you will need a visa and ISEP will be your [J-1 visa](#) sponsor. For study in another country, you may or may not need a visa depending on each country's visa regulations. See the [Country Handbooks](#) for more information.

[Q: What is the difference in undergraduate and graduate?](#)

A: In the USA, the first four years of university are called "undergraduate" and lead to a Bachelor's degree. The post-graduate studies are called "graduate" and lead to a Master's degree or a Doctorate degree. Some ISEP members accept students at the graduate level. See [US Higher Education](#) for more information.

[Q: What are my chances for being accepted?](#)

A: The vast majority of international applicants are placed at host sites; however, students may have to be flexible about the destination. Since ISEP-Exchanges are based on the number of students switching places, only an equal amount of outgoing and incoming students can go through a specific university.

The ISEP website will help you estimate your chances for being accepted to a certain site. It is to your benefit to spend some time researching this information carefully and to have realistic expectations about where you will be able to study.

See [Applying to a US Site](#) to find tips for applying and the Anticipated Openings list of institutions with the most space available.

If applying to an international destination outside the U.S., check the [International-to-International Sites Open for Applications](#) to see which sites are still available for the current application season.

Also read the notes in the Directory pages about the particular institution to see chances of placement and any special application procedures. Any sites with an **R** (US) or **I*** (International) have very limited space, so you should apply by the deadline and list several alternatives.

Q: How long until I know if I'm accepted?

A: The ISEP [placement process](#) consists of several steps. First, your home university forwards your application to ISEP. ISEP reviews your application and determines which of your choices is the best fit, and then sends the application to the host university abroad. This process may take some time because often specific academic departments also evaluate your application. Once the host institution accepts you, ISEP will forward acceptance materials to your home university. You should receive your acceptance packet within six to eight weeks after your application arrives at ISEP.

Q: Who do I contact for more information?

A: Since each university has a designated on-campus ISEP Coordinator, they will serve as your point of contact for advising and information throughout the process. Information about specific programs, how to apply, and student resources can be found on the ISEP website. The ISEP Central Office in Washington, DC serves as a resource to the ISEP Coordinators at each university.