DCPS Study Abroad – Frequently Asked Questions for Families

What is DCPS Study Abroad?
DC Public Schools (DCPS) launched DCPS Study Abroad in January 2016. DCPS Study Abroad is a fully funded, short-term domestic travel program for eligible DCPS students, managed by DCPS Global Education in the Office of Teaching and Learning. DCPS Global Education works with school leaders and partners to provide students with an understanding of world languages, global cultures and international issues, cultivating students’ global competence. Travel through DCPS Study Abroad occurs in the summer, and each trip is connected to content and course work your student is learning in school. DCPS Study Abroad helps ensure that our global citizens have access to global experiences, so that travel becomes the expectation rather than the exception for students. Learn more by visiting our website dcpsglobaled.org.

Is my child eligible?
- Current 8th grade, 11th grade, Certificate 3, and Opportunity Academies DCPS students are eligible.
- Students must be enrolled in a DC Public School (DCPS) to participate in DCPS Study Abroad.
- Students must be studying a World Language, which means:
  - 11th grade students: must have completed, or be currently enrolled in, a Level 2 World Language course or higher
  - 8th grade students: must have completed a World Language course this School Year
  - Certificate 3 students: must pursue World Language study
  - Opportunity Academies students: must have finished 9th grade, must be graduating from DCPS in August 2022 or later, and must have completed a Level 1 World Language course or higher

How much does it cost?
DCPS Study Abroad trips are fully funded, including all passport and visa fees, roundtrip airfare, meals, and lodging. Students may choose to bring personal spending money for purchases like souvenirs and snacks.

When does travel occur?
DCPS Study Abroad trips occur in the summer. Anticipated travel dates for the 2021-2022 School Year fall between June 27, 2022, and July 13, 2022. Trips vary in length from 8 – 12 days. Visit our website dcpsglobaled.org, where you can browse our sample itineraries to get a sense of the types of trips we offer.

What types of trips are available through DCPS Study Abroad - Stateside?
DCPS Study Abroad includes domestic short-term study abroad programs on language immersion, global leadership, and service learning.
- Language Immersion: Student hone their language skills in an immersive, real-world environment. Language Immersion tours include several hours of intense language instruction.
- Service Learning: Students develop global citizenship and immerse themselves in another culture while performing meaningful community service to benefit others and support local sustainable development efforts.
- Global Leadership: Aspiring global leaders can participate in a Global Leadership summit with peers from around the world, or gain a regional perspective by visiting multiple countries. Students
who participate in the Global Leadership summit will have the opportunity to hear from experts, participate in workshops, and gain valuable insight into global issues.

**How can my child participate in DCPS Study Abroad?**

Eligible students interested in DCPS Study Abroad must submit an application.

- Visit [dcpsglobaled.org/apply-now/](http://dcpsglobaled.org/apply-now/) to learn about the program.
- Students will log in to Study Abroad Online (http://studyabroad.dcps.dc.gov) to submit an application before the deadline of 11:59 PM EST on November 12, 2021.
- Applicants will be informed of their status and, if accepted, their trip assignment in January 2020 and must confirm their participation via Study Abroad Online (http://studyabroad.dcps.dc.gov).
- Travelers must obtain a passport and any necessary visas and vaccines prior to trip departure. DCPS Study Abroad will cover the cost of all required passport, visa, and/or vaccination fees.
- Student travelers should enroll in the U.S. State Department’s free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) for traveler safety (See [step.state.gov](http://step.state.gov) for information).
- Every student traveler is required to participate in pre-departure training with trip leaders, abide by their trip’s itinerary, adhere to the DCPS Study Abroad Student Code of Conduct, and develop a post-travel "Making Global Local" project to share their study abroad experience with others.

**What does the application process involve?**

Your student will be asked to provide:

- Basic information, including their name, address, school, email, whether or not they have a current passport, their World Language skills, and parent/guardian contact information.
- Information about the type of trip experience they hope to have, including where they might want to study and what kind of trip they might want to participate in.
- One reference with contact information. This person should be a teacher or another adult who knows the student well and isn’t a relative.
- Short-answer essays responses to three questions. Students are encouraged to prepare and review their answers in advance. The suggested length is 200 – 300 words per question.
- Students can download a PDF of the essay questions in order to prepare and ultimately submit their application online by visiting our website: [http://dcpsglobaled.org/how-to-apply/](http://dcpsglobaled.org/how-to-apply/)

**What are the essay questions on the application?**

Students are required to respond to three short-answer essays questions in the DCPS Study Abroad application. The suggested length for each essay is 200 – 300 words, but there is not a firm length requirement. Students are encouraged to prepare and review their answers in advance.

1. **Essay 1:** Please explain why you want to participate in DCPS Study Abroad. What do you hope to experience by traveling? What do you hope to learn from traveling? How do your travel goals align to your interests and/or your goals for the future?
2. **Essay 2:** Describe your approach to challenges in general. Give an example of a time when you faced a difficult challenge or obstacle. Then, explain in detail how you handled that situation.
3. **Essay 3:** Participating in DCPS Study Abroad is a serious commitment. Requirements include attending meetings, completing paperwork, behaving respectfully toward others, and completing a project. Students must participate in all program requirements before, during, and after travel. Students may also be invited to participate in surveys and interviews about their experience. Why do you think you are prepared for this level of commitment? Describe responsibilities you might have at school, your job, community, and/or home. Explain in detail how those responsibilities will prepare you for participating in DCPS Study Abroad.
What are the trips for DCPS Study Abroad this year? Can my child choose their preferred trip?
There are sample itineraries available for review on our website so that parents and students can get a sense of the types of trips DCPS Study Abroad offers. In the application, students answer questions about their World Language abilities, their ideal trip experience, and their top geographical region of interest, so that we can better determine what type of trip will best fit their language skills, interests, and learning goals. Students can use the essay section of the application to expound upon their language skills and interests in specific travel destinations.

- Sample itineraries for high school students: [http://dcpsglobaled.org/11th-grade](http://dcpsglobaled.org/11th-grade)
- Sample itineraries for middle school students: [http://dcpsglobaled.org/8th-grade](http://dcpsglobaled.org/8th-grade)

Can I travel with my child?
Unfortunately, DCPS Study Abroad cannot support parent/guardian travel or parent/guardian participation in on-tour activities associated with DCPS Study Abroad. In the event that a parent/guardian chooses to make personal travel arrangements that coincide with their child’s DCPS Study Abroad trip, be advised that parents/guardians cannot participate in tour activities, such as guided sightseeing tours or group meals. All students and Travel Ambassadors in the DCPS Study Abroad program must participate in their assigned trip’s itinerary in full; they may not modify their travel arrangements, make individual travel plans outside of their assigned group’s travel plans, or selectively participate in group activities. If a parent/guardian makes travel arrangements that coincide with their child’s DCPS Study Abroad trip and chooses to separate their child from their tour group, the student could be considered withdrawn from the DCPS Study Abroad program, potentially resulting in the cancellation of their return flight and any remaining travel bookings.

Can my child travel to/from their assigned destination on their own, or participate in personal or family travel while on tour?
All students and Travel Ambassadors in the DCPS Study Abroad program must participate in their assigned trip’s itinerary in full. They may not modify their travel arrangements, make individual travel plans outside of their assigned group’s travel plans, or selectively participate in group activities.

What COVID-19 precautions will be taken during DCPS Study Abroad travel?
While we cannot predict the status of the COVID-19 pandemic at the time of travel, promoting of the safety of our students is always our first priority. The following COVID-19 health and safety precautions will be taken for DCPS Study Abroad:

- All students and staff participating in the DCPS Study Abroad program are responsible for providing proof of vaccination against COVID-19 prior to departure. Students and staff who do not provide such documentation will not be permitted to travel.
- DCPS Study Abroad will monitor local and national public health guidance for COVID-19 travel and safety protocols.
- DCPS Study Abroad will purchase travel insurance that makes it easier to cancel or change the itinerary as a result of COVID-19 travel restrictions.
- DCPS Study Abroad will adhere to DCPS Health & Safety Measures at the time of travel.

How else will the DCPS Study Abroad program keep my child safe?
Travel Ambassadors will do their very best to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child at all times. Here are some of the steps DCPS Study Abroad has taken to ensure the safety of your child:

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The DCPS Study Abroad program adheres to the District’s required chaperone-to-student ratio for field trips to ensure students are supervised at all times.

- Students and Travel Ambassadors are required to abide by a DCPS Study Abroad Code of Conduct.
- Students are required to submit a Field Trip Permission Form, so that their trip leaders will know about any all medical conditions and/or allergies they may have.
- All participants in the DCPS Study Abroad program are asked to enroll in the U.S. Department of State’s free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at step.state.gov. Participants who are not U.S. citizens should check with their home country’s embassy, as some countries offer similar programs for their citizens.
- All participants should visit the U.S. Department of State’s website travel.state.gov to learn about their destination(s) and to check for important security alerts or warnings for travelers.
  - **Travel Alerts** are issued when the U.S. State Department wants travelers to know about short-term events when planning to visit a country. Although DCPS Study Abroad program staff and our contracted educational travel vendors monitor Travel Alerts for situations that merit extra caution and attention, Travel Alerts do not usually cause alterations to trip itineraries.
  - **Travel Warnings** are issued when the U.S. Department of State wants travelers to consider very carefully whether they want to visit a country at all, given potential risks. Travel Warnings may cause DCPS Study Abroad to alter trip itineraries, possibly changing planned travel dates, destinations or both.

**Contact Information**

Please e-mail study.abroad@dc.gov with any questions.