

Effect of Studying Abroad on Expected Graduation Date

Texas A&M University values the international experience as a crucial part of one’s college career and offers a wide range of Study Abroad Programs. Every year the graduating seniors participate in a survey where they are questioned about having an international experience. According to the survey conducted by Measurement and Research Services (MARS) in spring 2007 & 2008, an average of 24% of the total respondents of the graduating seniors said they did not study abroad because they thought it would delay their graduation. A similar trend followed in spring 2009 with 27% of the total respondents not having international experience for the same reason.

The Office of Institutional Studies and Planning (OSIP) examined the graduation data for the first full-time freshmen who entered in fall 2001, 2002 and 2003. The data shows that there is no delay in the graduation date due to students participating in a study abroad program. For example, the fall 2003 cohort numbers include students entering as first time full time freshman in 2003 and have a graduation date in the year 2007 or 2008. Almost 532 students had studied abroad while 4,503 students had not. The students who had studied abroad, on average, took 8.3 (not including summer and transfer hours) to graduate; whereas those who did not go abroad took 8.5 terms. However, even the data that includes summer terms shows that students who studied abroad took, on average, 10 terms; whereas those who did not go abroad took 9.9 terms.

General Results ⁽¹⁾

	Fall 2003 cohort		Fall 2002 cohort		Fall 2001 cohort	
	Students	Average terms	Students	Average terms	Students	Average terms
Summer term not included						
Study Abroad	532	8.3	508	8.5	465	8.7
Non-Study Abroad	4508	8.5	4682	8.6	4600	8.7
Summer term included						
Study Abroad	532	10.0	508	10.1	465	10.6
Non-Study Abroad	4508	9.9	4682	10.1	4600	10.3

Source: Office of International Students and Programs (OSIP)

Conclusion

These results clearly show that there is no significant difference in the amount of time it takes to graduate among the students who study abroad and those who do not. By planning ahead and working with one’s academic advisor a student can take classes required for the degree without extending one’s graduation date.

(1) Cohorts comprises of firsttime, fulltime freshmen completing a first undergraduate degree. Students receiving two degrees counted only once in the cohort.