Evaluations were collected for 69 out of the 84 students on programs abroad during 2011/2012. Of the students completing the evaluation, 13 students participated on a Loyola bilateral exchange or a Loyola-sponsored study abroad program. 30 participated on an ISEP exchange or direct program, and 26 studied abroad on a “non-Loyola” program offered through a third party provider. Overall, students reported a high level of satisfaction with their specific study abroad programs (85% felt that their program was the right program for them.) and CIE provision of services (basically, all the students were satisfied with CIE services). Overall, Loyola exchange programs tend to be very highly rated. Evaluation of the services and academics of ISEP programs are highly variable and as we learn more about the programs, we can better advise students. Where we have a number of students looking for programs in a specific country, we will try and identify exchanges in those locations. The benefits of careful selection of universities abroad and the personal relationships that we build with these institutions cannot be overstated. When a student is well matched with the program, we get comments like this one which reflect the type of growth that we hope will happen on every study abroad program. “Getting to live in Istanbul and experience what it is to be an outsider in a place that is different from your home beyond your wildest dreams. It's terrifying at first, and I just wanted to go home and quit sometimes in the early weeks. But I got over it, and I let go and allowed myself to mess up, get lost, be wrong and realize that if you do this, you might actually learn something. Now, there is a little hole in my heart where Turkey and all the people I met there used to be.”

EVALUATION METHODS:

Students are required to complete the semester evaluation upon completion of their study abroad program. The questionnaire is available to students in their online study abroad accounts. Students are asked to comment on the following: the quality of their study abroad program, pre-departure preparation, on-site orientation, quality of academics abroad, foreign language learning, opportunities for connecting with host country nationals, culture-learning, housing, experiential learning, computers, communications, budgeting, packing, diversity issues, CIE services, staff abroad and recommendations for future students. A complete set of question items follows this summary.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

• When students were asked if their study abroad program was the right one for them, 88% of the students said “yes.” 4 students gave qualified responses and 4 students felt that it was not the right program for them because of cost, location or lack of services.

• 88% of students said that they would recommend their study abroad program to other students.
  ▪ Two of the students who said “no” studied on non-Loyola programs and complained about the additional cost of going through a provider.
  ▪ Two of the students studied through ISEP in France and commented on the lack of support from the onsite coordinator and the academics. The public university system in France can be difficult for our students because of the different academic systems and levels of support from both faculty and staff.
  ▪ Other students had specific issues that would make them not recommend their program, such as not liking the city, housing issues at the university, or the quality of the language at a certain level.

• 92% of students were satisfied with CIE services and 82% were satisfied with the pre-departure orientation. Three students felt like the orientation was too long. Students suggested the following improvements:
  ▪ More site-specific information.
  ▪ More information on transcripts
  ▪ More information on emergency contacts and procedures.

• 78% of students reported satisfaction with on-site orientation and 85% were satisfied with the provision of services abroad.
  ▪ Only one student complained that there was no on-site orientation on the ISEP programs at Universite Paul Cezanne(Aix-Marseille III), France.
Quality of orientation was poor on the ISEP program at Ajou University, Universidad Blas Pascal, Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica.

There seem to be mixed reviews for the staff at Koç University depending on the semester, “The support of the exchange program needs some work, but after persistence things got accomplished. Really, my largest ally with problems undergone in the country was my mentor and my mentor’s family. However, the exchange program staff essentially provided my mentor, so I suppose they were a big part of this.”

Other complaints were general and often were contradicted by other students on the same program.

Many students praised the staff abroad. The staff of the international office of ESCE (Paris, France), Keele (Keele, U.K.) and Massey (New Zealand) received particularly positive reviews.

88% of students were satisfied with academic quality of their study abroad programs. Of the students who were not satisfied with the academic program, two were at ISEP programs in France. The other negative comments dealt with academic quality or specific issues and often it was in reference to one class. Numerous students commented that they enjoyed taking courses presenting a different perspective. Students attending the same institution often had different perspectives of the academic program. For example, one student at Massey found the courses more challenging and another less challenging. Students at Koç University were particularly pleased with their courses, “The academics were rigorous and engaging. I was extremely impressed with the quality of the faculty and the level of instruction.” Music Industry students at UEL were also pleased with their music industry courses.

100% of students reported that studying abroad helped them to understand another culture.

Few students felt they were the direct targets of discrimination, but there were issues for women and street harassment and gender roles and for LGBT students. Some students did experience anti-Americanism. Students also observed racism within their host country against specific populations, e.g. the Maori in New Zealand, the Roma in the Czech Republic, and against Afro Irish and Jews in Ireland. The continuing issues of racism in South Africa were noted by all students.

Students offered some very insightful tips for future study abroad participants encouraging them to be open minded, do your research and learn as much of the language as they can, and be independent. The comments below are typical.

Don’t pack your life just because you are afraid to leave. Less is more. You will gain more on your journey that you will want to share with others. This goes with luggage and beyond.

You will get generalized as a typical American, but learn from the remarks and see how you can present the country in a positive light. You might not feel like you "fit in" with the way others talk to each other, but this is all a form of their culture. Once you break the code, you can make some life-long friends.

The advice that I would have loved to receive is this: Not every moment abroad is going to be awesome. There are some things that you’ll see and hear that are not fun or happy. And there are some days that you just don’t want to leave your bed. Studying abroad is not easy, but if you go into it knowing that you will have some bad days (from homesickness, annoyance at the culture, missing free internet) then the good days will be exceptional and the bad days will soon fade from memory.

You will have a culture shock, especially if you are going to a third world country or to a place where your native language is not the common language, but that is OK!!! You will get through that period and eventually begin to love your new home and remember why you chose to study there to begin with. Just keep an open mind. It can be hard to do sometimes, but be open to making new friends. Put yourself out of your comfort zone because nothing great happens when you are comfortable.

To really realize that they are leaving behind any pre-conceived notions of themselves. That when they land, no one has judged them yet, so they can really honestly be and act however they want without feeling self-conscious. So it's important to decide ahead of time not to waste time being shy, because the time flies by and you want to throw yourself out there and use as much of it as possible.

Specific recommendations

- Bring adapters
- Bring important documents, including a copy of your birth certificate
- Don’t pack too much
- Buy a pay-as-you-go cell phone on site
All students suggested that future study abroad students bring their own computers and budget carefully and find out about the currency and the cost of living in advance.

Students generally listed numerous benefits from study abroad and not just one. The most common benefits listed were:

- Making new friends from the host country and other countries and learning how to interact effectively with people from other cultures (13 students)
- Learning about and appreciating a new culture (13 students)
- Gaining facility in the language (12 students)
- Learning about oneself/becoming independent and self confident (14 students)
- Skills gained in an internship and networking opportunities (3 students)
- Clarified future academic goals (3 students)

**CHANGES PROPOSED BASED ON EVALUATIONS:**

- Work with NUI Maynooth on housing and make sure that future Loyola students are advised about the appropriate Residence Hall for upper class students.
- France – Look carefully at the ISEP institutions in France and the evaluations to advise students on the sites with more appropriate services. Also begin looking at other options including MICEFA which has a one week orientation and other partners who will provide more services.
- Pre-departure orientation
  - Put some of orientation on-line to shorten the actual program.
  - Explore ways to add specific cultural component through organized meetings with incoming exchange students, past study abroad participants and individual meetings.
  - Put parts of student evaluations online for Loyola programs.
- Add information and resources for LGBT students in “Explore your Options” and in online orientation.
- Add information and resources on Gender roles abroad and street harassment.
- Add information on classroom behavior to differences in academics abroad.
- Add visa information in the study abroad application. Continue to have a separate session on visas in the pre-departure orientation. Continue to provide information on the visa at pre-departure orientation. CIE will encourage students to start the visa application process themselves and make individual appointments with CIE staff if they encounter any difficulties.
- Integrate “advice for future study abroad students” into pre-departure orientation.

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How did you find out about this program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why did you choose this specific study abroad program and country?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Was this the right program for you? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-departure orientation</td>
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<td>On-site orientation</td>
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<td>I was satisfied with the quality of the academic program.</td>
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<td>Academic Program</td>
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<td>I was satisfied with the quality of the foreign language instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please comment on the foreign language instruction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studying abroad helped me to understand the host country culture.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>The field trips/excursions that were part of the program academically enriched the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please comment on the field trips/excursions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The program provided adequate opportunities for interaction with host country nationals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please comment on your interaction with host country nationals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The staff abroad provided adequate support with any problems or concerns I had.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would you recommend this program to other students?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Please comment on the support of the host country staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td>Experiential learning</td>
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Program changes

Overall, what was the greatest benefit you gained from your study abroad experience?

What was the most difficult thing you encountered abroad?

Did you use the Loyola Center for International Education (CIE) as a resource?

Were you satisfied with the services provided by CIE?

What do you wish CIE and Loyola had done to assist you in studying abroad?

Is there anything else you would like CIE to know about your study abroad experience?

Advice on Computers

Advice on Communications

Advice on Budgeting

Discrimination

Advice on packing

Advice to students

Advice to students on arrival

Advice on preparing

Willing to be contacted by future potential program participants?

**EVALUATIONS:**

Available in StudioAbroad