

UCCS Abroad 101: Finances

Hello, and on behalf of the International Affairs office, welcome to another segment of Abroad 101. Today we'll be talking about the financial aspects of going abroad – program costs, financial aid, scholarships, and more. After watching, I encourage you to check out our other Abroad 101 videos, which focus on the overall process for going abroad, academics, the application process, and more.

We know that cost can be a big factor in whether or not you're able to go abroad, and that sometimes trying to understand the processes involved with financing this adventure can feel overwhelming. We hope today's video can help break down the elements, as well as help you better understand the resources available to you, so that finances are not the barrier that prevent you from realizing your dream of studying abroad.

Let's start with cost. A program's overall cost is determined by its fee or tuition costs, any charges associated with obtaining a passport and/or visa, health insurance, airfare, housing, and personal and additional expenses. Let's look at each of these for an introduction to the overall cost landscape.

The single largest cost for an experience abroad is the program fee itself. This is for academic tuition and credit toward your degree, and typically includes room and other program specifics. You can find this information either on the program page at educationabroad.uccs.edu or on the partner provider's external website. Fees are determined by program length, location, and the provider running the program. Shorter programs are often less expensive than longer programs, although not always. Additionally, some locations, such as Scandinavia, may be more expensive than others,

simply because the cost of living is higher in that area of the world, which drives operating costs up.

Another thing to note is that different elements may or may not be included in your particular program of interest, which does also affect cost. For instance, one provider's fee may cover tuition, housing, and visas, while another provider's fee may only cover tuition and visas, making the first provider's program look more expensive than the second's at first glance. Take a look at the fee breakdown to gain a sense of what's covered and what isn't, and make sure you understand how fees really compare.

It's important to note what each program fee covers and remember that when you view the cost of a program on a provider's website, you're not necessarily seeing what you may need to pay out of pocket for, like travel and personal expenses that are not covered by the program fee. More on that in a minute.

A key element of program participation that may not be included in the program fee is the cost of obtaining your own personal passport and/or visa. This will be your own financial responsibility, typically costing about \$145 for a new passport. Visa costs may or may not be included in the program fee, and will also depend upon the country you're traveling to, since each nation sets its own rules. For instance, if you're interested in traveling to France for a semester, you'll need to travel to Los Angeles for an in-person appointment at the French embassy, the cost of which you will be responsible for. Make sure to research and factor in any applicable visa costs when considering your program.

Another factor in the overall cost of your program is health insurance. All UCCS students are required to carry international health insurance with a certain minimum

coverage. Most U.S. health insurance carriers provide only limited coverage out-of-country, such as emergent care only. We recommend International Student Insurance, whom we have partnered with to offer a plan that meets our minimum requirements for as little as \$0.85 a day. Note that most U.S. health providers' plans do not meet the minimums UCCS requires, and it will likely be cheaper to purchase the one we offer than to try and get your current U.S. plan to match the minimums. For more information, visit abroad.uccs.edu, hover over Going Abroad, and click on Health Insurance.

Airfare, which is fairly central to going abroad, is also usually not included in the program fee, so make sure you plan for this too. Some providers enable you to book group flights through a particular provider, which can be helpful if you've never booked international travel before – but that convenience can sometimes be more expensive than booking on your own, so do check out commercial carrier rates, as well. A basic rule of thumb is to plan for about \$1,000 for roundtrip airfare.

Housing is another huge piece of the total cost of going abroad. It's program-specific and is often included in the program fee, but isn't always. Sometimes it may need to be paid before any financial aid is disbursed, so when learning about the program that interests you, keep an eye out for specifics about housing. We can guide you through any remaining questions you may have.

And now for the fun parts. An important budgetary factor is your own personal expenses. You'll want to savor the local flavors and culture. Find out what, if any, meals may be included in your program, and then budget for non-catered meals, as well as anything else you want to buy, such as in-country transportation, local experiences,

souvenirs, personal care, and so on. Most providers suggest a good planning number to help you get an idea of what to expect for your program – take a look at their budget sheets for more.

Then, for even more fun, consider that you may want to travel around inside your host country, or to other areas within reach of the region where you'll be staying. Your program may offer planned excursions that aren't included in the program fee, so take a look at the provider's website to see if any interest you and add that to your personal expense budget.

Taken together, these elements combine to form the true, overall cost of your education abroad experience. Make sure to take them all into account when considering whether a program will be affordable for you. And one more thing – it's critical to note that some of these costs will be up front, such as the program deposit, airfare, and travel documentation, and therefore occur before financial aid has been disbursed, so plan accordingly. I'll talk more about financial aid in just a minute.

As I said at the beginning, we know cost is often a factor for many UCCS students, and we work hard to make sure our program offerings are affordable as well as amazing. And for those of you for whom cost is a huge piece of being able to go abroad, we've got extra affordable program options up on our website. Check out the Short-Term/Summer Programs under \$2,500 and Semester Programs under \$10,000 tabs on the left menu for more. You can also search by these categories on the program search page under Themes & Meta Majors.

Now that we've talked about costs, let's talk about how you can finance this experience. There are several ways you can finance your education abroad experience in addition to adhering to a realistic budget, so let's talk about financial aid and scholarships.

First things first, your UCCS financial aid can travel with you, which can help you finance your trip. With 3rd party and exchange programs, in order for your aid to transfer, you must take a full course load depending on the session you're abroad for – 6 credits for the summer, and at least 12 credits for a semester. Speak to the Office of Financial Aid as early as possible, because the earlier they know you're planning to go abroad, the better they'll be able to advise you on how to use your aid to your best advantage. Additionally, make sure you have a current FAFSA on file, or file one if you don't – aid cannot be disbursed without it.

The courses you take while abroad **MUST** be related to your degree here at UCCS for aid to transfer, which the Study Away Form helps us to ensure. Make sure to meet with your Academic Advisor and talk about your course options early on in the process, so that you'll be able to be on track when you meet with Financial Aid. For more information on academics abroad, take a look at our Abroad 101 segment on academics.

Finally, financial aid won't be disbursed until your program actually starts and your enrollment has been confirmed, so keep that in mind when planning your budget. Any up-front costs, like airfare and travel documentation, will need to be covered by you. For more information on education abroad and financial aid, you can visit abroad.uccs.edu, hover over Get Started, and click on the Finances tab. If you have financial aid-specific questions, you can contact the Office of Financial Aid via email at finaidse@uccs.edu or by

phone at 719-255-3460. You can also visit their website at uccs.edu/finaid or stop by their offices in Cragmoor Hall 201.

Another great way to help finance your time abroad are scholarships. Your program provider may have some specifically for their students, which you can find information about on their website. Sometimes, there isn't even a separate application – you're automatically considered just by applying for the program. There are also great national scholarship options, too, like the Gilman, which is for federal Pell Grant recipients. You can find out more about available national scholarships by going to abroad.uccs.edu, hovering over Get Started, and clicking on the Finances tab.

Additionally, if you receive certain scholarships for your time at UCCS, like the Daniels Scholarship, there may be specific funds for education abroad as part of that award that you can take advantage of. Take a look at your awards and talk to a scholarship counselor to see if any of your scholarships qualify. No matter what, you should always apply for any scholarships you think you may qualify for, because you never know, and if you don't apply, you definitely won't receive any. If you've got scholarship questions, reach out to the Scholarship Office via email at scholarships@uccs.edu or by phone at either 719-255-3390 or 719-255-5164.

I know that's a lot of information, but I hope this video has helped you understand the financial piece of education abroad better. As always, if you have questions or would like to set up a meeting, you can reach us via email at international@uccs.edu, by phone at 719-255-5018, on Facebook at UCCS International Affairs, on Instagram at [@uccs_international](https://www.instagram.com/uccs_international), and on Twitter at [@uccsinternat](https://twitter.com/uccsinternat). You're also welcome to stop by our

office in Copper House 9202 or visit our website at abroad.uccs.edu. Thanks for watching,
and happy planning – we can't wait to see where you'll go!