

# Messiah College EpiCenter

## *Four years to forge experiences that last a lifetime*

### ✓ *First Year: Exploration*

The first year on campus is the most important for students interested in off-campus study; it is the year that will lay the ground work for participating in experiential learning. Students will discover programs options, will work with their advisors to learn how these programs will compliment their disciplines, and will begin choosing courses at Messiah with an understanding of the types of courses they can take off-campus. Because of curricular obligations, it is **crucial** that students in some majors (Education, Engineering, Nursing, Nutrition) exploration process as soon as they arrive on campus and in some cases, begin the application process soon after.

- *Let your advisor know that you are interested in studying off-campus.*
- *Visit the EpiCenter to explore programs and discover courses that may meet general education or major requirements for your field of study. Students also can begin this search at [www.messiah.edu/studyabroad](http://www.messiah.edu/studyabroad)*
- *Once you find a program in which you are interested, contact your academic advisor to see how this will fit into your curriculum. It is especially helpful to let your advisor know as early as possible so that he or she can help you choose courses that will not duplicate what you will be taking off-campus.*

### ✓ *Sophomore Year: Application*

For many students the second year is the time to start applying to study off-campus. Some programs are open only to juniors and seniors which makes the sophomore year the optimal time to begin this process. Consider applying up to a year in advance. Some programs are very competitive; early application may give you an advantage.

- *Pick up applications and checklists from the EpiCenter.*
- *Start reading / learning about the country in which you will be studying (check out the EpiCenter library) - read local newspapers and research information on the web. Check out the EpiCenter web page for helpful travel- and country-related information: [www.messiah.edu/studyabroad](http://www.messiah.edu/studyabroad) Talk with other students on campus who studied at your intended location; a resource list of students is available in the EpiCenter. Or browse the Facebook group, “**I Want to Study Abroad**” to talk with returning students.*
- *Visit your advisor with course listings and complete an off-campus study form to choose possible courses for your off-campus semester.*
- *Once you have been accepted, refer to your application checklist. Visit the EpiCenter for assistance with passports, International Student Identity Cards, off-campus study forms, and air arrangements for Central American Study and Service, Jerusalem University College, London Internship Program, LCC International University, Oxford Study Abroad Programme, Scholars’ Semester in Oxford, Temple Rome, and the University of Valparaiso.*

**Note: If you are planning to study off-campus during your sophomore year, you will need to complete the application steps during your freshman year.**

### ✓ **Junior Year: Realization**

You have completed your preparation; now is the time to make all of that hard work pay off. Enjoy your semester off-campus.

- *Once you arrive on site, you will receive a weekly e-mail newsletter from campus. The newsletter WILL BE SENT TO YOUR GROUPWISE ACCOUNT. Also, students will receive electronic information about course offerings and registration instructions for the following semester as well as other important communications from campus offices (housing, parking, for example).*
- *Many students participate in internships during the spring semester of their senior year, a transition from academics to the world of work. Consider an internship your junior year and bring that hands-on experience back to campus. You will be surprised how much it will enhance classroom learning.*

### ✓ **Senior Year: Reflection**

You have had a wonderful experience off campus. Now is the time to share your enthusiasm with others in the college community. As you begin to process what you have learned, you will discover you have a lot to offer – not only to other students, but to the campus as a whole and to future employers.

- *Attend re-entry workshops and celebrations.*
- *Share your experience with other students:*
  - 1. Speak in classes / participate in panel discussions*
  - 2. Agree to serve on the alumni resource list*
  - 3. Participate in classroom discussions drawing from your experiences off campus*
  - 4. Befriend an international student - who better than you (if you have studied internationally) knows how it feels to be a stranger in a totally new culture*
  - 5. Join the Messiah Facebook group, “I Want to Study Abroad” and share your experiences with students who are exploring their options*
- *Share your insights about the program with the EpiCenter staff. Each semester the EpiCenter surveys students who studied off-campus the previous term. By completing this survey, you help Messiah College evaluate our programs and help us know how we can serve future students more effectively.*
- *Include your off-campus experience on your resumé. You have experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom, experiences that translate into a stronger resumé when you begin your career search.*

\* For some students, it may be possible to study abroad in years other than your junior one. Please consult your advisor and the staff at the EpiCenter for more advice on this option.