

Tips for Maximizing your Research Experience on Study Away

Are you planning to do research or an independent study project during study away?

This brochure offers suggestions on how to proceed.

Any required steps are marked with ⇒

PREPARE BEFORE YOU GO

- Reflect:
 - What is your intended research topic? Have one or more in mind.
 - What research methodology/ies are you planning to use?
- Resources:
 - Meet with a research librarian to learn more about available resources on your topic.
 - Talk with professors who are familiar with either 1) your research topic or 2) your research methodology.
 - Ask for recommendations on resources to bring with you and prepare for more limited access to books and (possibly) online resources.
- Act:
 - ⇒ Complete online Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) certification.
 - ⇒ Human/animal subjects research? If so, find out which IRB will review your research: <http://www.macalester.edu/studyaway/predeparturetoreturn/researchreview/>
 - Former students suggest packing a book about the methodology you plan to use. Ask a librarian or professor for recommendations.

RESEARCH PROCESS WHILE AWAY

- Reflect:
 - After living in your study away location for a while, is your research topic still interesting/relevant/doable?
 - Many students change topics after arrival. Flexibility is key!
 - What are some ethical questions or concerns that may arise during research? How will you handle these?
 - What do professors, program staff, local peers, homestay families, etc. have to say about your topic? These answers can help shape your research questions.
 - What resources and local experts on your topic are available *and* accessible to you?
- Resources:
 - Macalester Library offers expanded ILLiad services to study away students. You can chat with librarians online or via email.
 - Networking with local researchers/experts in your field of research is key. If you find one person who has helpful information, ask them for suggestions on others to contact. In some locations, it's helpful to ask for a formal introduction

- Act:
 - Make a plan for deciding on a topic, collecting data, and writing your final paper. Include deadlines, even if your program doesn't set them for you.
 - ⇒ Human/animal subjects research? It's time to submit research proposal to appropriate IRB in timely manner. Expect there will be some revisions required. Do not begin any research until you receive formal approval.
 - Save copy of formal approval letter/email (send to CSA).
 - Collect data!
 - Write final report / paper.

PLAN FOR COMING BACK

- Reflect:
 - Will you use this research back at Macalester for a senior capstone, honors thesis, other paper/project?
 - If so, will you need further information to expand your research or supplement the data you have collected?
- Act:
 - Be organized! It can be very difficult / impossible to track down information after you leave. Keep records of contact information, data collected, research notes, resources and more.
 - Ask questions while you can. It can be hard to track down faculty, advisors, local experts etc. from afar. Ask all the questions you can while you're there.
 - Bring back written materials (books, articles, etc.) you have found helpful. Macalester's Library may not be able to locate materials you utilized while away, especially if they are in national or government archives. Ask if you can make copies and bring them back with you.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Center for Study Away: studyaway@macalester.edu