

Study Abroad Association Launches Virtual Study Abroad

International learning organization announces new virtual programming in response to COVID-19

BEDMINSTER, NJ. [March 31, 2020] – While the current public health crisis may be affecting opportunities to travel abroad, it doesn't have to keep students from immersing themselves in an international educational experience. [Virtual Study Abroad](#), launched by Study Abroad Association, brings global experiences directly to diverse classroom types with partnerships between international high-ed consortiums and technology companies and educators.

“In times of crisis opportunities for innovation present themselves,” said Christian Alyea, Director of Study Abroad Association. “How do we reduce financial risk and liability for institutions and students and make programs more accessible, while still providing an in-depth international experience? The answer is to go virtual and internationalize your curriculum with Virtual Study Abroad.”

The new Virtual Study Abroad programs offer the ability for faculty to bring the world to their classrooms by infusing global learning into their custom curriculum. Examples of virtual programming options include live streaming seminars from experts in the field, live classroom exchanges and risk management workshops. Students can also explore world-class museums, businesses, cultural monuments, archaeological sites, national parks and more with virtual site visits.

“I truly believe this is the future of learning,” said Jerry Hensel, an IT Professor at Valencia College who recently partnered with a university in Brazil for a series of virtual cultural exchanges and projects. “Virtual Study Abroad allows teachers to bring interactive content to their classrooms in ways they might not have seen before. In addition, to using a book they can bring the contents of the book to life by using virtual reality and really engage students in an additional type of supplemental learning.”

In addition to the immediate concerns related to travel and safety given the current pandemic, virtual programming offers additional benefits for faculty and students. This type of programming drastically reduces costs, negates the need for program cancellations or minimum enrollment numbers and is risk-free. Educators also feel a virtual learning experience will nurture curiosity, lower fear and increase motivation for students to participate in traditional study abroad programs when it is once again safe.

“As the world becomes more intensely interconnected in all aspects of human activity, more and more employers are insisting that college graduates have intercultural competencies that enable them to work effectively within and across a variety of cultures,” said Dr. Richard Johnson, Director of International Education at Harper College.

“We are collaborating with Study Abroad Association on a dynamic series of remote interactive globally-infused learning modules that may be inserted and/or complement existing curricula in a variety of disciplines. In this day and age of stay-at-home orders and quarantines, it is imperative that institutions of higher education lead.”

For more information on Virtual Study Abroad programs offered by Study Abroad Association, visit studyabroadassociation.com/virtual-study-abroad/.

About Study Abroad Association

Since 2009, Study Abroad Association (SAA) has been committed to customizing the most in-depth and affordable short-term, faculty-led study abroad and service-learning experiences. SAA is a collaborative effort between colleges and universities across the United States dedicated to increasing study abroad participation among students and faculty on their campuses. The association currently works with over 150 institutions across the United States with enrollment sizes ranging from 1,000 to over 90,000 students.