

Students with Dependents

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Students with Dependents

A dependent includes a spouse, registered domestic partner, and/or child.

Some study abroad programs allow participants to bring dependents abroad. If you're planning to or thinking about bringing dependent(s) abroad, you should meet with your campus study abroad advisor to discuss your questions and help you identify study abroad programs that could work for you.

Consider which programs are a good fit for you academically, personally, and financially by looking up eligibility criteria, program structure, course offerings, housing options, program calendars, and program costs.

Review the [instructions for taking dependents abroad](#). Participants bringing dependents abroad are required to enter a legally binding [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the University of California.

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND FINANCIAL AID

You will be financially responsible for all expenses associated with dependents. You must have adequate financial resources to cover the extra costs.

A comprehensive student budget, which includes tuition, program fees, housing, books and supplies, meals, travel insurance, round-trip airfare, local transportation, and incidentals is available for all UCEAP programs. If you're considering traveling with family members, the costs associated with taking your family members are not included in the program budget.

Financial aid is available for students going on UCEAP. Financial aid students are repackaged for financial aid based on the total budget of the program. You may request an estimate of your financial aid package for a specific study abroad program by contacting the Financial Aid Office at your UC campus. The office has a dedicated liaison who works with UCEAP students.

A Cost of Attendance Adjustment Request (COAAR) may also be available to account for certain expenses, such as a computer purchase (once every three years) and medical/dental expenses not covered by insurance. For student parents, additional housing expenses and childcare expenses can also be considered during the study abroad term. Housing expenses will only be considered for one location, and can be funded with a housing grant. The rest of the COAAR is usually funded with additional loans.

Parent Grants vary by amount and may be available if you travel alone or with family members. Additional scholarships are available, including the [Gilman International Scholarship](#).

TRAVELING WITH DEPENDENTS

You have likely learned to balance multiple priorities while meeting the needs of you and your family members, and this will serve you well in your study abroad planning. Traveling with dependents or independently can be a tough decision, but it's up to you and what you want out of your experience.

Although parts of it may be challenging, studying abroad with dependents may be a worthwhile endeavor. With careful planning you can create an experience that will benefit you and your family. We encourage you to review this list of [programs with restrictions for taking dependents](#). International travel has many benefits for children including, igniting a sense of curiosity and adventure, increasing adaptability and flexibility, and building family memories.

Considerations When Taking Dependents on Study Abroad

If you're thinking of bringing dependents with you for all or a portion of your study abroad program, please consider the following:

- **Housing:** Talk with your campus study abroad advisor about what housing options are available on your chosen program(s), whether dependents can be accommodated in program-arranged housing, and any extra costs for housing family members. Select programs enable participants to arrange their own housing. If this is the case, use reliable sources to research your destination to maximize familiarity, safety, and comfort.
- **Travel documents:** All travelers of all ages need a valid [passport](#) to travel internationally. Passport processing times can range from several weeks to a few months. Visa and entry permit requirements vary by country, citizenship, length of travel, reason for travel, and age. UCEAP offers some guidance to program participants who need visas/permits for their study abroad program. Visa/permit processes can be complicated and lengthy, and many involve fees. You'll need to research what documents your dependents will need, and you'll be responsible for the application and associated costs.
- **Childcare:** Students who bring children abroad are responsible for arranging childcare during classroom hours, orientations, program-related activities, and study time. Please be advised that many programs won't allow dependents to partake in program-related activities or excursions. All study abroad programs have strict attendance policies. If you're traveling with a young child, you may consider also bringing a family member or friend who can provide childcare.
- **School for children:** Depending on the length of the study abroad program and your dependent child's age, you may consider enrolling your child in school abroad. It's your responsibility to research and determine if this is possible and/or required in your destination country (homeschooling is illegal in some countries). If you will be enrolling a dependent in school abroad, plan early, inform yourself of options, and coordinate the enrollment.
- **Travel and personal expenses:** You're responsible for funding all expenses related to your dependents, including airfare, travel documents, immunizations, healthcare, insurance, food, housing, childcare, schooling, transportation abroad, recreational travel, incidentals, and emergencies. If you choose to bring dependents with you for all or a portion of your program, plan to cover these expenses. The costs associated with taking dependents abroad aren't included in your UCEAP program budget.
- **Healthcare:** The student health center at your UC campus and the [Centers for Disease Control](#) provide information and strategies for traveling overseas. If you are traveling with dependents, be sure to contact their primary care physician for travel-related health services. You and your dependent(s) may need to obtain vaccinations prior to departure.
- **Insurance:** UCEAP strongly encourages you to purchase adequate insurance coverage for any eligible dependent traveling with you. Item #4 in the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) explains travel insurance coverage options for your dependent(s) and provides directions for online payment and registration.
- **Program terms and types:** A good fit is key to success when taking dependents with you on UCEAP.
 - Summer programs may be a good fit if you have school-aged children who can travel with you during their summer break. However, many summer programs are also intensive, meaning long days where you're attending classes and/or participating in required program activities and excursions.
 - Quarter, semester, or yearlong programs may work well if your goal is to have a long-term, stable experience immersing you and your dependent(s) in a foreign country. Research expenses, childcare, and school options as needed for your family. Also consider the impact that an extended time away from home may have on you and your dependent(s).
 - Multi-site programs may require different travel documents and vaccination requirements for you and your dependent(s) if you're traveling to multiple countries. These programs may require finding more short-term housing accommodations in multiple locations.
- **Preparing your dependent for going abroad:** Culture shock is a common experience for anyone traveling abroad, including you and your dependent(s). While living abroad with you will enrich their understanding of the world and different cultures, parts of the experience may be scary. Before traveling, consider

reading books or sharing media with them about where they will be living. Be sure to have open conversations with them about their feelings and do your best to reassure them you are there to support them.

- **Cultural differences:** Each culture has its own values and perceptions about parents, children, and families. Depending on your study abroad location, you may be perceived differently than you are used to. This may also vary depending on being a single parent, having a spouse, or based on one's gender identity. This may also be an opportunity to form special bonds with people you meet abroad, since family tends to be a strong cultural value across the world that manifests in unique ways. Research family values in the countries where you're considering studying abroad so you may prepare yourself and dependents for cultural differences.

Before proceeding with an application, discuss your thoughts and plans with your campus study abroad advisor to determine the viability of studying abroad with your dependent(s). In addition, be sure to talk with your major and college advisors about how to study abroad and stay on track for graduation. If you are a financial aid student, contact your UC campus Financial Aid Office to determine what your financial aid package will look like for your chosen study abroad program. You're also welcome to seek out resources for students with dependents at your UC campus to learn more about traveling with dependents.

TRAVELING INDEPENDENTLY

Many students with dependents have studied abroad independently or without their family members present. It is very normal to experience mixed emotions about traveling without your dependent(s) or spending an extended period of time away from your family. You may experience a range of emotions including pride, guilt, excitement, and nervousness. If you're experiencing feelings of guilt about traveling independently, consider ways of coping with and releasing such feelings. It's okay to take this time to enjoy your college experience without allowing stigma to detract from it.

Considerations When Studying Abroad Without Dependents

- **Program Terms and Types**
 - Summer is a common term for student parents to travel without their children because of its shorter duration. These programs are often intensive and students are busy during long days with classroom and/or program activities. If you're a financial aid student, consult financial aid counselors about your summer financial aid before you apply.
 - Quarter, semester, or yearlong programs offer the opportunity to immerse yourself in a new environment and/or develop your language skills. Oftentimes, it's more cost-effective to study abroad for a quarter, semester, or year versus a summer, because summer is an optional term, and there tends to be less or no institutional aid available for financial aid students in the summer.
 - Multi-site programs involve more travel and living in short-term group housing situations, so these may be easier to navigate while traveling independently.
- **Preparing for your absence:** It's normal for you and your dependent(s) to experience anxiety as your departure date approaches. Preparing in advance may ease the transition for the entire family. Share maps of where you will be traveling, teach them about the culture, and watch media from your destination country, so they can develop an understanding of the experience you will have abroad.
- **Communicating with family while abroad:** Prolonged absence from your dependent(s) can be difficult. To develop a healthy practice for yourself and your family, arrange a schedule of communications in advance. Google Duo, Facetime, Signal, Whatsapp, Zoom, and more apps are available abroad for you to stay connected to home.
- **Emotional support:** Counseling and psychological support services are available for you at your UC campus before you depart. When selecting a program, ask your campus study abroad advisor about on-site mental health support available in your study abroad location.

HYBRID APPROACH

You may consider having your dependent(s) visit you during your program. In general, a mid-program visit from your dependent(s) may be difficult to navigate in terms of housing, academics, and your own cultural adjustment process. In addition, you may not know your weekly and daily schedules and workload until after arrival. Consider having dependent(s) join you before or after your program, if possible. Discuss pre-program travel, travel documents, and budgeting with your campus study abroad advisor.