

Understanding the Program Cost Webinar Transcript

1. Hello, welcome to the Rutgers Global–Study Abroad’s webinar on understanding the costs associated with studying abroad and how to fund it. We hope this webinar will answer some questions and concerns you have as you prepare for a study abroad program. This webinar is not designed to explain the different types of study abroad programs and the application process. If you are interested in getting that information, please check out our Study Abroad 101 session and information on this session and future events are posted on our [calendar](#) website.
2. In today’s webinar we will be discussing the benefits of studying abroad, some common roadblocks that many students must overcome, how to determine the program cost, how to use the financial planning worksheet, how to fund the program, and the next steps.
3. First off, let me congratulate you for logging into this session and getting this far. It means you understand how important it is to study abroad and what incredible benefits it brings. You understand that it’s an investment into your future. Studies show that those who study abroad get hired after graduation more quickly and at higher starting salaries than those who don’t. More importantly, studying abroad changes the way you think – about the world, about yourself, and about what you want to do in the world. It’s the key to getting really good at another language, if that’s your goal. Or it’s the key to excelling in some other subject or skill, because you experience it from another perspective. And clearly you become more independent when you study abroad, better about managing money, and you stand out from the crowd. So, congratulations for taking this step. Now we want to help you keep walking on the road to studying abroad.
4. We want to talk frankly about money. Some students think study abroad is impossible because they just don’t have the funding. Sometimes that’s true. Often it is not. In this session we want to help you see that, yes, cost is always a factor, but it doesn’t have to be an obstacle. We can help you understand the expenses involved, what loans and scholarships you will qualify for, whether a short-term course or a full semester or year abroad is best. We can help you figure out how to make study abroad possible for you. This webinar will address some of these questions and concerns.
5. Our direct website is <https://global.rutgers.edu/study-abroad>. Once you’re on our homepage, click on “browse programs” and then you can **search for programs based on term, city, country or region**. You can also click on advanced search and **search for programs by other filters such as major**. Once you find a program you are interested in, you can find the costs associated with the program by clicking on the **budget sheet** for the appropriate term. For this webinar, we will be taking a look at two Rutgers study-abroad programs, as examples. We will be reviewing the costs associated with studying abroad for a full semester (12-18 credits) at the University of Reading in England, and the costs associated with studying on a two-week program in January in Mexico -- Empowerment through Community Engagement in the Yucatan, for 3 credits.
6. When you click on the appropriate semester, the budget sheet for that term will open. As you can see, the estimated total amount for a NJ resident for the University of Reading is \$22,335, for a semester, and for the two-week winter program in the Yucatan, \$3,520. But don’t freak

out. We get it. With proper planning, study abroad can work. It can be for you. Let's talk about what steps to take. We'll offer you some tips for how to make study abroad affordable.

7. First, take a look at the total cost for the University of Reading – the \$22,335 number. Let's break it down. First thing, understand that the only fixed cost is the *billable amount* – the “program cost.” That's the charge that will be posted on your Rutgers term bill; in this case, for the University of Reading, the charge for Fall 2017 will be \$12,514 for NJ residents and \$15,615 for out-of-state residents. This program cost includes tuition, ISOS health insurance, our admin fee and a weekend excursion at some of the UK's most interesting cultural sites. The other costs, the *non-billable costs*, are not fixed amounts, so you have some degree of control on how much you will spend on housing, airfare, meals, books, personal expenses and local transportation. The non-billable expenses will be costs that you will need to pay on your own. Non-billable costs will not appear on your term bill. Read the budget sheets carefully because our programs differ as to which expenses are included (billable) and which are not (the non-billable). So for this example, the only fixed amount is \$12,415 and the non-billable may be \$9,920 for an estimated total of \$22,335. You may not spend the total amount since the total is dependent upon the housing, flight, books, personal expenses and local transportation. Also, remember that you may have to pay for Rutgers health insurance if it is something you normally pay for a regular semester on campus.
8. Now we will take a look at a summer program and this example is for a summer in Mexico. The difference between a semester and a summer program is a student fee charge. This charge is placed by [Rutgers Summer Sessions](#) for taking a course during the summer. The amount that Summer Session charges may change every year and we will reflect the actual amount in the budget. Just like before, please consult the budget sheet to know what is included in the program cost as the billable expense and what is included in the non-billable.
9. The same applies for studying abroad in the winter as per this Mexico program. As with the summer session, the amount that [Rutgers Winter Session](#) charges may also change every year. Also, to know if the program cost listed is for the winter you would like to go abroad, please take a look at the year. We recognize all winter programs, regardless of the start date, as part of the new upcoming year. This means if the program starts December 26, 2016, it will still be part of the winter 2017 term.
10. So, are you confused yet?? This is a lot to take in. And the dollar numbers can look pretty scary if you don't break it down. So let's break it down. Look at the appropriate financial planning worksheet – for summer, winter, or semester. You can find them on our “[How to Fund Study Abroad](#)” webpage. These worksheets are guides to understand the estimated study abroad costs, to comprehend how financial aid can be used, to project how much funding you may need, and to map out the timelines of expenses. We will be using the semester financial planning worksheet to examine the estimated costs to attend the University of Reading study abroad program.

Step 1 is to look at the budget sheet and write down the estimated costs for the program; for this example, the estimated cost is \$22,335 for a NJ Resident.

11. Step 2 is to enter in the financial aid, scholarship and/or loan funding that you expect to receive, as stated on your [award letter](#). For this example, Michael Scott is receiving \$10,242 in financial aid so input that information for the semester you will be going abroad. In our example, Michael Scott's financial aid amount does not change between Fall or Spring, but it may for you, so, please use the appropriate award amount for the specific semester when you plan to go abroad. If you are using Pell, RAG, TAG, EOF, Presidential Scholarship and/or Stafford loans, then you can use those funds to study abroad because Rutgers is billing you. In rare cases, some forms of financial aid and scholarships cannot be used to study abroad, so, please consult with your Rutgers Financial Aid adviser if you are receiving a different form of aid. For example, some aid and scholarships can only be used if you are physically on campus.

If you qualify for tuition remission yourself or as a dependent child, please contact us for further information and review the [University Human Resources](#) policy. Tuition remission may be applied based on Rutgers tuition and not based on program costs.

If you are an athlete, please talk to [Athletics](#) about study abroad and your funding options. If you are a ROTC or Veteran student, please consult with [Rutgers Office of Veteran and Military Programs and Services](#).

Michael has also enrolled in a [Rutgers Tuition Payment Plan \(RUTPP\)](#) so that is already a set amount to be paid, based on his existing Rutgers bills. So his total expected funding will be \$13,747. But the study abroad "program fee" will be different from Rutgers tuition, so Michael will need to make adjustments to his payment plan once the term bill has been generated for his study abroad program. If you are not currently enrolled in a Rutgers Tuition Payment Plan, you might want to consider doing so for the semester you will study abroad. Consult the [Rutgers Student Accounting website](#) for further information.

Another important bit of information on your award letter is your *estimated cost of attendance*. As you can see, the estimated cost of attendance for Michael is \$32,649 for the Academic Year at Rutgers. This amount will change once the estimated cost of attendance for Michael's study abroad program is reflected on his term bill.

Here's how that happens. Once you pay your deposit with us to attend the program, we email Rutgers Financial Aid to let them know you will be studying abroad, and to tell them how much the program will cost, which is the budget posted on our website. In this case, we would inform Rutgers Financial Aid that Michael Scott will be going abroad for the Fall 2017 to University of Reading and that the estimated budget for that program is \$22,335. This does not mean that Michael will automatically be awarded additional financial aid for Fall 2017, but because his estimated cost of attendance will go up, additional scholarships, grants or loans can be applied to his term bill. Another way to look at it is how the cost of attendance is like a credit card limit. You need Financial Aid to increase your cost of attendance to study abroad in order for that limit to be increased and additional credits to be applied.

12. You will notice that the financial planning worksheets for summer and winter look very different from the Semester worksheet. That’s because the financial options are different for those terms.

For the summer, you can apply online for summer aid with Rutgers Financial Aid. In order to qualify for summer financial aid, you must be registered for at least 6 credits during the summer. So, you could do a 6-credit summer study abroad program, or you could study abroad for 3 credits, and take 3 additional credits through Rutgers Summer Sessions in New Jersey.

Rutgers Financial Aid will post the summer aid application on their website at the end of March to the beginning of April. You will need to download the application, complete it and return it back to the Financial Aid Office at your campus, not to our office. Be aware that grant money is very rare for the summer. Usually, summer financial aid comes in the form of loans. We advise you to talk to your financial aid advisor about your funding options.

For the Winter term, things are pretty straightforward – there is no winter financial aid available. So, proper planning is essential. One thing you can do is to anticipate the cost of Winter study abroad when you apply for loans for the Fall semester, so you will have some money available for the Winter term in the form of a refund check.

Please visit the [Rutgers Financial Aid](#) website for further information.

13. Step 3 on the Semester Financial Planning Worksheet is calculating your estimated remaining balance. (This is Step 2 on the Summer and Winter worksheets.) In our example here with Michael Scott, we are still looking at study abroad at the University of Reading. We have gone over that the estimated study abroad cost is \$22,335 and that the total expected funding is \$13,747 with an estimated remaining balance of \$8,588, which is a lot of money. Step 4 asks you to look at funding that GAP (the estimated remaining balance) through scholarships, personal funding and loans. Your plan in covering that GAP should equal or be greater than your estimated remaining balance from step 3.
14. The first option for funding the GAP is scholarships. Research and planning is essential for this. You need to start at least 1 full semester before going abroad. In fact, some scholarships require that you apply a year or more before you actually go, so it is never too early to start researching. There are a lot of scholarships available, but they are NOT guaranteed and should not be your sole source of funding. Please visit [our website](#) for information on different types of scholarships.

For semester students, you can apply for scholarships offered by our office – Rutgers Global–Study Abroad – and you can check out school and departmental scholarships offered for DRC, EOF and other departments. There are also need/merit-based scholarships, program-specific awards, scholarships for studying in specific countries, and national scholarships such as the Gilman for Pell Grant recipients. *If you are a Pell recipient, you should apply for a Gilman scholarship. Talk to us about that!*

For summer students, there are different scholarship options available to you as well, please take a look at our [scholarships website](#) for aid that may be applicable to you.

For winter students, the list of scholarships available is slim but there are some. Again, check out our [scholarships website](#). You should be applying for scholarships that we offer *as well as* outside scholarship options listed on our website.

There are different search engines we list on our page and one of the top ones is [iefa.org](#) which lists scholarships available to US and international students.

We highly recommend that you start researching scholarships as soon as you can because it is time consuming. One student has shared with us how applying for scholarships is like taking a class because you need to write the essay, have someone else review it, revise the essay, and then submit it. This particular student applied for 20 scholarships and was awarded 9. This student didn't dismiss scholarships that offered smaller amounts, because every bit helped. The scholarship amounts awarded to this student ranged from \$500 to \$5,000 and helped tremendously to pay off the term bill and to pay for some of the non-billable expenses. This student used Newark's Writing Center and professors to review essays.

Rutgers offers free writing assistance at the Learning Centers in [Newark](#), [New Brunswick](#) and [Camden](#). Please check out their website and schedule an appointment. They will help you organize your ideas and help you perfect your essay. Scholarships are extremely competitive so it is in your best interest to get some support. You may not realize that you have a beautiful, inspirational reason to study abroad and the Learning Center will help you organize your thoughts for you to create a powerful scholarship essay.

15. The second option for funding the GAP is looking into your own personal funding. Do you have time to save some money to go abroad? Do you want to travel while you are abroad, if so, how will you fund that? Are you willing to use some of your own personal savings to cover the costs? Do you have any family and/or friends to help fund the costs? It is important that you have some money of your own to use just in case you want to travel or want to purchase gifts or souvenirs.
16. The last option for funding the GAP is considering [federal, state and/or private loans](#). You can apply for loans to study abroad and this should be considered if you are not awarded enough funding from scholarships or if you don't have enough personal savings to make up the GAP. The good thing about loans is that you do not have to accept the full amount until you confirm your attendance on the term bill and even so, you can return some of the money if you are awarded scholarship funding later.

As explained before, when you pay the (nonrefundable) study abroad deposit, you are committing to the study abroad program, and we will inform Rutgers Financial Aid that you will be studying abroad and provide them the budget for your program. Rutgers Financial Aid will

not be able to certify any loans unless you have paid the study abroad deposit, so you can only apply for loans after you have financially committed to attend the program.

Semester study abroad students can apply for loans 2 months before the start of the semester at Rutgers. This means you can apply for loans in the beginning of July for the Fall term and in mid-November for the Spring term.

Summer students must complete a financial aid application with Rutgers Financial Aid before they will certify summer loans. It is advised that you apply for these loans in April in order for them to be processed for the May term bill deadline.

Winter students can apply for loans for the Fall term, usually in early November, in order to cover the winter expenses. Once Rutgers Financial Aid has processed the loan, a refund will be generated through the Fall term bill and you will use those funds to cover the cost to study abroad for the winter.

We highly recommend that you visit the [Rutgers Financial Aid website](#) for further information on different types of loans.

Personal tip about loans: there are many different types of loans with different interest rates and types. Do not accept the first one that accepts your application - do some research. If you are eligible for a loan by 2 different providers, find out how much the APR (annual percentage rate of charge) will be and if it a fixed or variable type. You have the power and ability to select the one that will cost you the least in the long run.

17. We are coming to the end of this webinar. I wanted to thank you for participating!

The next steps are:

1. Talk to your parents/guardians, your family and friends about your options.
2. If you have not started an application, hopefully this webinar has inspired you to start one. If you have started an application, continue to work on it.
3. Check out our Finance section for further information and a list of scholarships.
4. Start researching and apply for scholarships NOW, do not wait.
5. Throughout this process, do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email if you have any questions.
6. After you have been accepted and before you financially commit to study abroad, remember to review all of our financial documents (such as the withdrawal policy) and to attend Part II of the financial session. You can find the schedule for these sessions on our online calendar. Part II will go more in depth about reducing the non-billable expenses, answer any financial questions you may have and talk about why the nonrefundable deposit has not been paid.

We offer brief 10-15-minute walk-in sessions Monday through Friday between 12-3 pm at 102 College Ave, New Brunswick, NJ. If you attend Newark or Camden, please call us and we can talk over the phone at 848-932-7787.



Rutgers Global–Study Abroad
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
102 College Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8543

global.rutgers.edu
ru_abroad@global.rutgers.edu
848-932-7787
Fax: 732-932-8659

We also have Global Ambassadors, students who have studied abroad and are eager to talk to you and to share their own journey. Please visit [our website](#) to obtain their contact information.

If your main roadblock is funding and you still have some questions after attending this webinar, or if you would like to talk to someone in person about your concerns, please contact us in order to schedule an appointment with our Registration and Financial Coordinator.

Studying abroad will change your life in so many ways. It will challenge you to look at the world differently. The world is your textbook! Study abroad!