

## Integration of Study Abroad into the Core Curriculum

**Context:** Central College faculty recently approved a framework for a revised core curriculum comprised of five components: interdisciplinary studies (first-year and senior seminars); disciplinary studies; writing intensive courses; global sustainability; and the global perspective component described below. Student learning outcomes and an assessment plan have been developed for each component.

### Global Perspective Framework

The Global Perspective component of the Core was designed to affirm Central College’s commitment to a basic level of second-language competence for all students, strengthen Central’s commitment to intercultural understanding, and provide incentive for study abroad participation.

**The Global Perspective component has two parts:**

1. Second Language Proficiency
  - Central College Abroad language immersion program OR
  - Intermediate low proficiency (ACTFL)
2. Elective Component
  - Option 1: CCA semester program OR CCA summer program (6 week minimum) OR
  - Option 2: Complete 6 semester hours of Global Perspective Studies:
    - 3 s.h. International Studies
    - 3 s.h. Intercultural Studies

### Student Learning Outcomes

Students completing this component will demonstrate

1. *Minimum proficiency in non-native language*
2. *Knowledge, awareness and understanding of various cultures and world views*
3. *Increased respect and appreciation of diverse cultures*
4. *Increased desire and ability to ethically and responsibly interact in local, national and international communities*
5. *Increased understanding of how cultures interact and are interdependent*

### Alignment with Institutional Mission and Goals for Students

The Global Perspective component aligns with two of Central’s institutional goals for students:

- *To acquire **integrated knowledge** from a variety of academic, philosophical, and **cultural perspectives** as well as the in-depth knowledge of a chosen major.*
- *To develop moral character that is evident in ethical behavior, **intercultural effectiveness**, environmental stewardship, and service to humanity.*

### Where are assessment results used to implement improvements or generate new initiatives?

- *Institutional level:* Institutional strategic plan; academic strategic plan; Institutional Assessment Coordinating Council; Student Learning and Development Council; Dean’s Council
- *Program level:* Operational plans for programs and departments; Faculty Assessment Committee for academic programs

## Central College Abroad Programs

### Mission Statement for Central College Abroad

*CCA fosters **cross-cultural appreciation and foreign language development** through high quality study abroad programs. Because study abroad is integral to an under-graduate education in an increasingly global society, CCA is committed to provide intentionally designed **educational programs** that include rich **cultural immersion** experiences and provide personalized service to a wide range of students and institutions.*

### Program Features

- CCA was established in 1965. “Travel a distance farther than you imagined.”
- Eight sites: England, France, Austria, Spain, China, Mexico, Wales and the Netherlands offer academic studies in an international setting.
- Each program features an on-site program director who is a resident of the host country and a full-time employee of Central College.
- Cultural activities and excursions are included in each program.
- Internships and service-learning opportunities are available in each country.
- Over half of Central College students study abroad, most on semester-long programs.
- Extended orientation pre-departure and debriefing upon return (required course)
- 92 schools from around the country participate in the CCA Cooperative Schools Council.
- Faculty on the Pella campus are closely involved through their governance structure (Off Campus Policy Committee) and faculty liaisons for each program

### Evidence of Student Growth through Study Abroad

- Thus far we have compared GPI data for first-year students (baseline), and students (primarily upper class) planning to study abroad during pre-departure and at the end of their study abroad program. *Positive growth for students studying abroad is evidenced in all three domains of the GPI and in five of its six scales.* Central is also beginning a longitudinal study using the GPI that will allow us to trace the growth of a particular cohort and to compare students who study abroad with those who do not.
- Reflective journals, individual interviews and focus groups with students who have studied abroad evidence growth. Preliminary results of a more systematic qualitative study in which these and other materials were analyzed also indicate growth in key areas.
- CCA program surveys are completed by students every semester.
- Informally, faculty also regularly report the difference made in the classroom by students who have studied abroad.

### Effective Practices and Initiatives

- Facilitation of study abroad as an integral part of Central College
- Strengthened relations with students, faculty, staff and cooperative institutions
- Intentional program development and assessment to maximize student learning outcomes
- Development of individual program operational plans linked to institutional, academic and Central College Abroad strategic plans.