

# Northwood University Exchange Programs

Information Booklet  
2016-17



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Dear Student:

We are pleased that you are considering an exchange program. Making a decision to explore the world beyond the borders of the United States can be a life-changing experience. Studying abroad at a foreign college/university enriches students personally, professionally, and academically, and is something that no amount of U.S. classroom experience can simulate or replace. Study abroad also develops a level of maturity and self-confidence that can enhance any student's personal and professional skill set.

Northwood University has signed a number of exchange agreements with institutions in Europe Asia and Latin America. Students can choose a summer, fall/spring semester or year-long option for studying. This packet is designed to help answer your questions and make an informed decision about participating in an exchange program.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 989-837-4137 or via email at [vanchhaw@northwood.edu](mailto:vanchhaw@northwood.edu).

Sincerely,

*Stephen Vanchhawng*

Director, International Education  
Northwood University



### **What is an exchange program?**

An exchange program is one in which two or more institutions of higher education agree to “exchange” students over a specified period of time. Students who participate in exchange programs travel to the foreign institution – known as the **host** institution - to study and live for a specified period of time (usually a semester or a year)

and transfer the academic credit back to their **home** institution - Northwood University. In exchange, students from the host institution come to the home institution for a period up to one year.

Unlike group study abroad programs, where a group of Northwood University students travel together with an NU faculty member on a relatively “pre-scripted” program, individual students apply directly to the host institution and participate in exchange programs (though more than one student from NU may be going to the host institution). Each year, NU hosts several exchange students who come to NU for a semester or year of study.

Participation in an exchange program allows not just for study at a foreign institution, but also for a deeper cultural immersion and the formation of lifelong friendships with people from other countries and cultures. Students who participate in exchange programs invariably return to the U.S. with a profound appreciation for the richness and diversity of other cultures and customs. Students also gain a higher level of intellectual and emotional maturity and new language and interpersonal skills.

Northwood University has several exchange programs in place in Europe, Asia and in Latin America. These exchanges are with the following institutions with the institutional website listed below the name of the institution:

- Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Commerciales d'Angers (ESSCA) –Angers, France  
[http://www.essca.asso.fr/html/document\\_detail.aspx?havechild=1&rbID=28](http://www.essca.asso.fr/html/document_detail.aspx?havechild=1&rbID=28)
- Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Commerciales d'Angers (ESSCA) - Budapest, Hungary  
[http://www.essca.asso.fr/html/document\\_detail.aspx?havechild=1&rbID=28](http://www.essca.asso.fr/html/document_detail.aspx?havechild=1&rbID=28)
- Pontificia Universidad Catolica Madre y Maestra (PUCMM) – Santiago, Dominican Republic  
<http://www.pucmmsti.edu.do/>
- Ostfalia University of Applied Science – Wolfsburg, Germany  
<http://www.ostfalia.de/cms/en/index.html>
- The Hague University –Netherland – (International Business Management Studies)  
<http://portal.hhs.nl/portal/page/portal/en>
- John Cabot University – Rome, Italy  
<http://www.johncabot.edu/>
- PALAZZI – Florence, Italy  
<http://www.palazziflorence.com/>
- CEA – Argentina, Costa Rica, Brazil, Spain (Barcelona), and South Africa  
<http://www.ceastudyabroad.com/>
- USAC – Brazil, London, New Zealand, Spain (Bilbao/Getxo), and Australia (Gold Coast)  
<http://usac.unr.edu/>

The credits earned at these institutions can, by written agreement, be transferred and accepted into a student's Northwood University program.

Though host institutions may publish a specific deadline for accepting exchange applications, students who are contemplating participation in an exchange program should typically plan on meeting the following deadlines for application and acceptance to the host institution:

*Fall Semester* – application and acceptance completed by March 15 of the preceding spring

*Spring Semester* – application and acceptance completed by October 15 of the preceding fall

*Summer Programs* - application and acceptance completed by March 15 of the preceding spring

Students are often worried about their language capability in terms of participating in an exchange program. **Please note that for the exchange programs listed above, all instruction is in English, EXCEPT for the program at PUCMM, which is taught in Spanish.** It is not necessary that students be fluent in the official language of the country where the host institution is located, but students are encouraged to learn about that country's history and culture, and need to learn some basic words and phrases in that language.

### Eligibility

Most host institutions will assume that you have completed basic coursework in areas like English, Computer Science, Mathematics, Economics, Accounting, Management and Marketing before you participate in an exchange program. Thus, the eligibility standards for exchange programs are somewhat different than for group study abroad programs. **Students must:**

- 1. Have successfully completed at least 30 term hours at Northwood University (e.g., be in your sophomore year), or, if a transfer student, have successfully completed the equivalent of 30 term hours and completed at least one term at Northwood University.**
- 2. Have fulfilled any course prerequisites for academic credit associated with Exchange programs.**
- 3. Have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5. Some institution requires a GPA of 3.0.**

NOTE: Students on academic or disciplinary probation are not eligible for exchange programs. Students must be in good academic standing during the program itself. If students are in good standing when they apply for exchange programs, but are put on academic or disciplinary probation between the time of application and the starting date of the program, the student becomes ineligible to participate in the exchange.

Specific exchange programs may have additional eligibility requirements (these will be noted in the host institution's application and information).

### Application Procedure

Before applying for an exchange program, students should spend some time thinking about their goals and objectives – why do I want to participate in an exchange program? Do I want to live abroad for a semester or an entire academic year? Can I afford it? The following site is a very comprehensive overview of preparing yourself to engage in a study abroad program:

<http://www.studentsabroad.com/>

Students who wish to apply to an exchange program must follow the procedures below:

1. Read and review the information presented in this packet, and complete the attached application.
2. The application will be evaluated by the Director of International Education. If the student has indicated an interest in receiving financial aid, a copy of the application will be sent to the student's campus Financial Aid office.
3. The applicant will be notified whether he or she meets the criteria for acceptance to an exchange program. If the applicant is qualified, the student will meet with the Director of International Education to discuss application to the program, program logistics, appropriate courses and transfer credits.

A budget showing estimated costs for the exchange program will be prepared for the student.

A letter describing transfer credits awarded by Northwood for successful participation and completion of specified courses in the exchange program will be placed in the student's file and copies sent to the student's campus Academic Dean, Registrar and Financial Aid Office.

4. The student completes the host institution's application and sends it to Director of International Education, Northwood University, 4000 Whiting Drive, Midland, MI 48640-2398. The application, along with any other documentation (such as transcripts) and a cover letter endorsing the application, will then be sent to the host institution. The host institution will then notify the student of his/her acceptance, and will send information regarding travel, housing options, course enrollment and registration, student life, etc, at the host location to the student. The student will then start communicating with the host institution, directly, for further arrangements.
5. The student is then responsible for making all the necessary arrangements to study and live at the host institution, as detailed in this booklet.
6. If the student decides to cancel, the student is responsible for the cancelation fees, which will be charged onto the student's account. Each program has a different cancelation policy, fees, and deadline. The information regarding the cancelation policy will be provided to the student.

## Academic Programs

Students in all majors may participate in exchange programs, and participating as an exchange student will not normally interfere with progress toward degree completion. Students in some majors with specialized coursework only offered in specific terms must carefully plan, in cooperation with their Academic Dean's office, for the completion of required courses that they may miss while in the exchange program. However, the International Programs office and the Academic Dean's office will work closely together to help insure that progress toward the completion of a degree proceeds on schedule.

The host institutions which Northwood University works with have a variety of academic programs and courses that "fit" into Northwood curricula. Each institution has a slightly different academic calendar and infrastructure, but all institutions offer coursework in various areas of business, humanities, and social sciences. The courses do not always "look" like courses at Northwood. For example, ESSCA is a French school of management that offers only business-related degrees, similar to NU. ESSCA offers a series of "modules" that incorporate multiple course content within one course. So, a student taking the module entitled *The Jean Monnet Module* will take content that encompasses fields such as History, Economics and Management.

Other institutions such as PUCMM are more traditional institutions which offer a variety of academic majors and courses. Students who take coursework at PUCMM will choose courses that may look like courses at NU,

rather than modules that cover multiple intellectual areas. But keep in mind that coursework may “look” very different elsewhere!

## Assessment/Grading

Assessment and grading will be done using the host institution’s grading system, which will be different from that of NU. Students will receive a final transcript showing the grades earned in the various modules/courses. The transcript may also show the U.S. equivalent of the foreign grades.

For example, ESSCA uses the French grading system, which consists of a numerical score of 0 – 20. Listed below is the rough equivalency used to convert French grades to the American grading system:

<u>French Grade:</u>	<u>American Grade:</u>
16 – 20	A+
14 – 15.9	A
12 – 13.9	B
10 - 11.9	C
Below 9.9	Failure

**NOTE: Northwood University will consider transfer credits based on the equivalent U.S. grade. That is, only those grades which are at the “C” or above on the American system will transfer. So, for example, if a student took a course at ESSCA and got a grade of 9.5, the course cannot be accepted by NU for transfer credit, as it falls below the equivalent level of a “C” grade in the U.S. system. *Only credit transfers – not actual grades.***

**NOTE: If a student changes the coursework he/she is taking, the office of the Director of International Education must be notified and that coursework for appropriate transfer credit. Northwood University does not guarantee transferability of credit for courses which have not been pre-approved in writing.**

After receiving all final grades, each participant will receive a final official transcript of grades that is at the same time sent to the Director of International Education at the Northwood Michigan campus. This document will then be forwarded to the appropriate campus Registrar for the actual awarding of transfer credits.

## Costs

Northwood University students who participate in exchange programs do not pay any tuition to the host institution, but instead pay Northwood tuition.

This cost may be assessed in one lump sum, or divided into payment terms. The business office will work with students to set up a payment schedule if needed.

Students are also responsible for all costs such as airfare, accommodations, meals, health insurance, books, passport and visa fees, laundry, etc. These costs include:

- travel expenses to/from the exchange site/host institution (airfare, train fare)

- living expenses at the exchange site (rent, food, transportation, laundry, clothing, etc)
- any student fees assessed by the host institution
- books and educational supplies
- passport and student visa fees, student identification card
- incidental travel while living abroad, incidental spending money

Expenses vary widely among the different exchange programs. For example, apartment rent alone in Angers, France, might run to \$350 - 700 Euros per month, while a homestay in the Dominican Republic might be only \$150 per month for room and board. Regardless of their program, NU personnel will help individual students develop a budget and estimate expenses during their time abroad.

**If the student decides to cancel, the student is responsible for the cancelation fees, which will charged onto the student's account. Each program has a different cancelation policy, fees, and deadline.**

### Financial Aid/Scholarships

Financial aid is available to eligible students. Students are strongly recommended to meet with a Financial Aid counselor to review their financial aid status. In order to apply for funds, students should complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* for the academic year that includes the exchange program. The FAFSA application is available on line at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Paper FAFSA applications are also available in the Financial Aid Offices on each campus. Your eligibility for aid will be determined by your campus Financial Aid Office after it receives the results of your FAFSA application, any additional requested documentation and your exchange enrollment letter (as noted in step number 3 of the application process). The Financial Aid Office will work closely with the Director of International Education. Any questions relating to financial aid should be directed to the student's Financial Aid Office.

### Insurance, Health and Travel Safety

Northwood University cannot assume any responsibility for your medical expenses while you are on an exchange program. In general, it is highly recommended that students review their personal insurance coverage before traveling or studying abroad. Insurance should cover sickness, hospitalization, accidents, repatriation, and any civil responsibility. **Students attending this program should check with their insurance provider as to coverage for health and medical insurance while traveling and studying abroad.**

In general, there is little health risk in traveling and studying abroad. Though "over the counter" medications are often available, students who are taking prescription medications should take the original prescription and enough medication to cover the first several weeks while they are living at the host institution. Medications should be carried in the original container. Students should consult the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for further information about their exchange location at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>. The World Health Organization (WHO) also lists information at: <http://www.who.int/en/>

Northwood recommends that students review the CDC and WHO information and consult with their physician at least 6-8 weeks prior to departure about any personal medical conditions or about receiving vaccinations before traveling. It is the student's option and responsibility to consult with his or her physician about any health conditions and obtain any vaccinations

Safety is a prime concern of all who are involved in study abroad programs — participants, their families, advisers, institutions that send students abroad, those that host them, and the staff of all organizations that

operate programs. There are risks that are unique to the overseas settings, and when those rare incidents occur, the impact on participants and their families is often more profound because of the unfamiliarity of the context and the distance that separates participants from their primary sources of consolation and support. Keep in contact with your family - just to provide reassurance.

Northwood University generally:

- Cannot eliminate all risks from the study abroad environment.
- Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
- Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.
- Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.

***In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.***

Students should also be aware of safety issues as they travel within their host country and if they travel to other countries while in the exchange program. Students should also be aware of any travel warnings or advisories published by the U.S. State Department. Such information can be found on a country-by-country basis at: [http://travel.state.gov/travel\\_warnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html).

As with any type of living or travel arrangement, personal safety is important. Students should always be careful to secure important documents and protect their valuables, and be aware of their surroundings in their location.

## Accommodations

Accommodations vary widely among the different exchange sites, but the similarity is that most host institutions overseas have little or no on-campus housing. For example, neither ESSCA nor PUCMM has any on-campus housing, but each institution's international office will help students to find housing and identify roommates. Housing at European institutions is almost always in apartments near the campus while housing at PUCMM is in homestays with families that live on the periphery of campus.

Students can also choose not to work with the host institution and find their own accommodation. If a student chooses to find his or her own accommodation, neither NU nor the host institution will be held responsible for providing assistance or logistics for such arrangements.

Students will need to coordinate their arrival time with the host institution. Each institution will have their own procedure for arrival/pick-up and orientation. Students who choose to arrive early at their host institution should make appropriate arrangements ahead of time with the host institution.

## Practical Information about Living Abroad

### **Passport:**

You **must** have a valid passport to participate in an exchange program. The passport must be valid for at least six months beyond the date of your initial entry to the country in which you will be living.

Information about applying for a U.S. passport is at:

[http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)

NOTE: It may take up to 6-8 weeks to get a passport in the U.S. Make certain that you have your passport well ahead of time, as it will be needed to apply for the student visa. Passports applications can be “expedited” for an additional fee, and expedited passports generally take about 2- 3weeks.

### **Visa:**

The visa legislation for students varies from country to country, but most countries require that you apply for and be approved for some kind of student visa before traveling to the host institution. A visa is nothing more than a document stamped or placed in your passport that allows entry into that country for a specific purpose.

Students usually need to apply for a visa in their home country, meaning that you must apply for the other country’s visa at their embassy or one of their consulates in the U.S. A visa application usually requires that you submit an application, a letter of acceptance from the host institution and your actual passport along with a fee to the country’s embassy or consulate. Some countries require proof of medical insurance for a visa. This visa is placed in your passport and then sent back to you.

**It is ultimately your responsibility to apply for the visa.** You are responsible for obtaining the visa. Timing is a factor – some visas take longer to process and have deadlines that are weeks in advance of the dates you want to travel. Make sure you budget enough time for the application process.

### **International student card:**

Your host institution may or may not issue student ID cards. We therefore strongly advise students to apply for an international student card before leaving the U.S. Such cards can often give you free access to the library and computer rooms at the host institution, and sometimes allow discount prices at museums, theaters, etc. Information about the card is at: <http://www.isecard.com/> or at [http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=istc\\_info](http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=istc_info)

### **Language:**

With the exception of PUCMM, all instruction at host institutions is in English. However, you will be living in another country where the native language is not English. You will need to buy groceries, deal with merchants, ask for directions, order from a menu, use transportation, etc, and thus we strongly encourage students to learn some basic words and phrases in that language. You may wish to take college coursework in that language or at least buy a phrasebook. Some host institutions offer “survival” coursework, and students should take this coursework if it is offered and needed.

### **History and Culture**

You will be living in another country. It is highly recommended that you make some effort to learn about that country’s history, geography and culture. Utilizing books, magazines, travel guides, websites and any other resource will help you know more about the place in which you will be living and studying. Northwood University students who have previously done exchange programs always mention that time invested in learning about the host institution and country prior to leaving the U.S made their experience easier and more

enjoyable. These students also mention that travelling during any free time was a wonderful experience, especially if done with other exchange students that were also genuinely eager to learn more about other cultures and customs.

You will generally find that if you are curious and genuinely interested in your host country's culture that natives are often eager to engage with you and share with you their own history and culture. A smile is international and needs no translation. Using a few words in a native language and expressing interest in local lifestyles will help "break the ice" and help you develop lasting relationships with new international friends.

## Resources and Questions

General resources about studying abroad are listed below:

General Information	<a href="http://www.studentsabroad.com/">http://www.studentsabroad.com/</a> <a href="http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/resources/index.shtml">http://www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/study/resources/index.shtml</a>
U.S. Department of State	<a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</a>
Passports	<a href="http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html">http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html</a>
U.S. Centers for Disease Control	<a href="http://www.cdc.gov">www.cdc.gov</a>
World Health Organization	<a href="http://www.who.int/en/">http://www.who.int/en/</a>
International Student ID Card	<a href="http://www.isecard.com/">http://www.isecard.com/</a> <a href="http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=istc_info">http://www.istc.org/sisp/index.htm?fx=istc_info</a>
CIA World Factbook	<a href="https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html">https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html</a>

Questions about exchange programs can be directed to:

- Mr. Stephen Vanchhawng, Director, International Education  
[vanchhaw@northwood.edu](mailto:vanchhaw@northwood.edu) 989-837-4137
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