

**International Studies Program**  
**Curriculum Policy Statement on**  
**Research Paper in Lieu of Study Abroad for the International Studies Minor**

The International Studies Advisory Board approved the following policy regarding submission of a substantial research paper as a substitute for the curricular requirement of engaging in a study abroad program to complete the Minor in International Studies.

Approved 17 November 2015

*Rationale*

The Affiliated Faculty of the International Studies Program view a study abroad experience as a critical component of the maturing and education of students who pursue the Minor in International Studies. There are circumstances, however, in which a student dedicated to the Minor would find it extremely difficult to engage in an extended experience abroad, such as family or employment responsibilities. Allowing a substantial research paper to substitute for a study abroad experience provides curricular flexibility to allow students in such circumstances to complete the Minor in International Studies. It should be pursued only in these special circumstances.

*Logistics*

A student who wishes to pursue this option must discuss the matter with the Primary Academic Advisor for International Studies and submit a written petition that requests this option and explains the reasons for not engaging in a study abroad program. The International Studies Advisory Board will decide whether to approve the request. If the petition is approved, the student will need to engage a faculty member from among the International Studies Affiliated Faculty to serve as their Faculty Sponsor for the project. The Faculty Sponsor shall have responsibility for guiding the student in completing the steps outlined below and for evaluating the quality of the final product, the research paper. This is essentially an independent study project, but it will not have any associated credit hours because it is not a university course. The Faculty Sponsor should assign a grade for the completed paper using the standard University scale. A grade of C or better is required for the paper to count as completion of the curricular element – i.e. the study abroad experience. Finally, this must be an original research product and not something that is being undertaken to meet requirements in another program or course.

1. A brief proposal of research: a topic or thesis statement and a preliminary outline.
2. A completed paper from 7,000 to 14,000 words in length.
3. A public presentation of the research.

All steps must be completed well ahead of the date on which a degree with the minor will be conferred, based on the standard academic calendar of the University. e.g. Completion by late April for a May graduation.

*Content*

There is no clarified definition for what constitutes a substantial research paper; comments below are intended to provide generalized guidance that must be interpreted by the Faculty Sponsor in each individual case. One overarching requirement is that the project must engage substantial aspects of at least one foreign country. These could be cultural, historical, linguistic, economic or political features of the country or a set of countries. In addition to this basic requirement, the content should reflect one or more of the following or some analogous substance not listed below.

1. Research in primary sources in a foreign language.
2. Research from archival primary sources.
3. Research based on personal interviews of individuals with substantial connection to the country or countries addressed in the paper. These individuals could be students or faculty at Indiana State University, or they could be immigrant residents in the area.
4. A broadly based survey of secondary academic literature on the topic of the paper.
5. Research based on quantitative analysis using published data on the economic, political or social system of the country or countries engaged in the study.