

How to
Write an
Effective
Study Abroad
Essay



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We get it.

Essays are sometimes hard to write. Scholarship and study abroad applications ask you to write about yourself with what seems to be very little structure. With all of the long hours you're putting in at the studio, how can you possibly take time to sit down and write an effective study abroad essay?

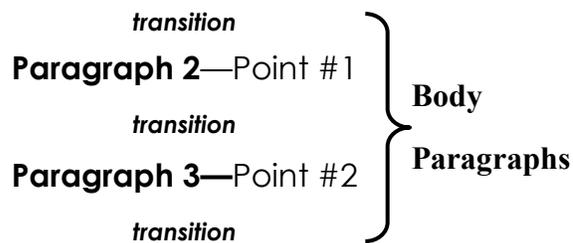
Good news! This booklet will help clarify just what readers want to hear from your essays. Simply follow these steps and essay writing will be less daunting.

STEPS to that great essay!

1. **Read** the essay prompt. No really- read it. Slowly.
2. **Read** the essay prompt **again**. It seems crazy, but this is a step that is frequently skipped. You will probably better understand what the essay is asking.
3. Think back to your English classes in high school. Remember this structure?

Paragraph 1—Introduction

- ⇒ First sentence of Introduction – a “hook” that catches the reader's attention
- ⇒ Last sentence of Introduction – a thesis statement about two specific points you will make



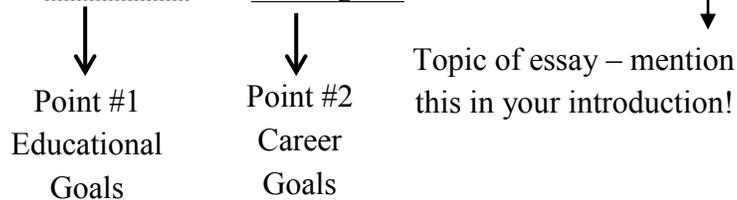
Paragraph 4—Conclusion

- ⇒ Summary of both points with a catchy finish

This is the best structure to follow for a personal essay. You may use only one body paragraph as long as both points are mentioned. Memorize this structure. It will be useful later in life (in critiques, position papers, appeals to parking violations, arguments with your landlord, etc.).

4. Now, figure out what the prompt is asking you. Here is the MICA Study Abroad Statement of Purpose essay prompt:

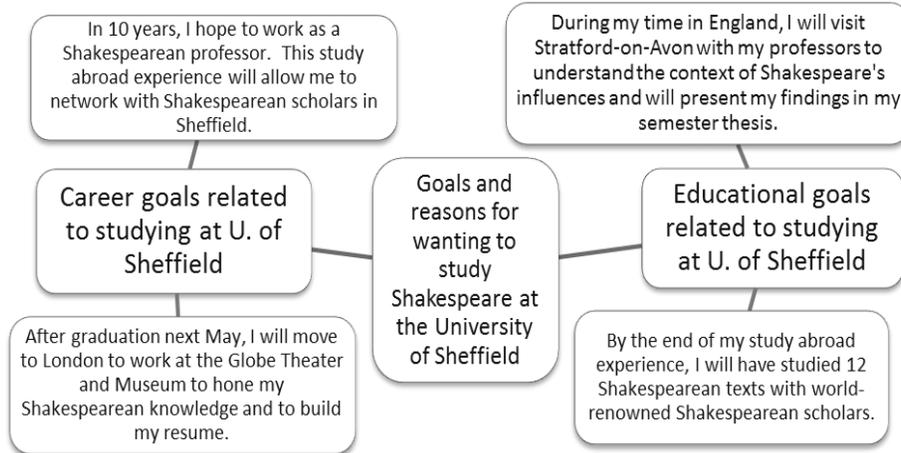
Please write a one-page (double-spaced) statement of purpose and attach it to this application form. The statement should be a thoughtful and concise consideration of your goals and reasons for seeking to study abroad at your prospective host institution, including how your proposed course of study at the host institution relates to your educational and career goals.



5. Plan your essay. **DO NOT START WRITING YOUR ESSAY YET!** This is the “pre-writing” step. Make a mind-map, a chart, an outline or use other pre-writing tool that will help you organize your thoughts. Write your thoughts down on paper. Some examples are on the following page. Notice how **the examples all have the same information**, just presented in different ways.

****Your goals need to be SMART:
Specific, Measurable, Attainable,
Relevant, Time-bound ****

Mind Map



Goals and reasons for wanting to study Shakespeare at the University of Sheffield	
Educational goals	Career goals
- During my time in England, I will visit Stratford-on-Avon with my professors to understand the context of Shakespeare's influences and will present my findings in my semester thesis - By the end of my study abroad experience, I will have studied 12 Shakespearean texts with world-renowned Shakespearean scholars	- After graduation next May, I will move to London to work at the Globe Theater and Museum to hone my Shakespearean knowledge and to build my resume. - In 10 years, I hope to work as a Shakespearean professor. This study abroad experience will allow me to network with Shakespearean scholars in Sheffield.

Chart

Outline

- I. Introduction: Thesis – By studying abroad at the University of Sheffield, I will gain skills and experiences that will help me achieve my career and educational goals.
- II. Point #1: Educational goals related to studying at U. of Sheffield
 - A. During my time in England, I will visit Stratford-on-Avon with my professors to understand the context of Shakespeare's influences and will present my findings in my semester thesis
 - B. By the end of my study abroad experience, I will have studied 12 Shakespearean texts with world-renowned Shakespearean scholars
- III. Point #2: Career goals related to studying at U. of Sheffield
 - A. After graduation next May, I will move to London to work at the Globe Theater and Museum to hone my Shakespearean knowledge and to build my resume.
 - B. In 10 years, I hope to work as a Shakespearean professor. This study abroad experience will allow me to network with Shakespearean scholars in Sheffield.
- IV. Conclusion

6. Now, it's finally time to write! Follow the directions from the prompt– in this case, 1 page, double spaced.

Studying Shakespeare at University of Sheffield: “Why then the world’s mine oyster”

One man, William Shakespeare, single-handedly changed the world. He revolutionized the art of theater, satire, and the English language. His influences and phrases are still prominent in everyday speech today, almost 400 years after his death. The world’s most prominent Shakespearean scholars at the University of Sheffield in England immerse students into the culture and context in which Shakespeare wrote. As a burgeoning Shakespearean scholar, studying abroad at the University of Sheffield in the English department will allow me to develop skills and experiences that will help me achieve my educational and career goals.

The Shakespeare program at the University of Sheffield is well-suited to my educational interests. I have extensively studied Shakespeare’s life and times; however, I have not yet had the opportunity to travel to or study in England. By studying abroad in Sheffield, I will be required to visit Shakespeare’s house in Stratford-on-Avon and Shakespeare’s Globe Theater in London for a production with my professors. The professors accompanying these trips will discuss the context, troubles, and controversies of Shakespeare’s eventual journey to the Globe Theater. I will present my findings in my end-of-semester research essay about the multiple Shakespeare theories, which will provide the framework for my senior thesis here at MICA. By the end of my study abroad experience, I will have intensely studied 12 separate Shakespearean texts with world-renowned Shakespearean scholars. These research and scholarly opportunities will directly impact my eventual career as a Shakespearean scholar.

Directly following my graduation from MICA, I plan to return to England to work as a curator and a researcher for the Globe Theater. Studying abroad in England will allow me to familiarize myself with the culture and the research process in England, thus preparing me to reside in England. Working and researching at the Globe Theater will provide the foundation and skills I need to become a leading Shakespearean scholar at a United States university in the next ten years. I plan to engage students in the controversies surrounding the various theories about who Shakespeare really was, culminating in research trips and study abroad opportunities to England. Studying abroad as a student will provide me with the knowledge and ability to facilitate effective research-based study abroad programs to England in the future.

Pistol’s statement in the Merry Wives of Windsor, “why then the world’s mine oyster,” perfectly summarizes the study abroad program at the University of Sheffield. This opportunity to extensively research Shakespeare with world-renowned scholars is unrivaled in other schools. I am committed to making this study abroad program a part of my lifelong learning process and will incorporate the skills I acquire into every experience, educational and career-related, in the future .

This is a refined thesis statement. Note how you can tell that I will be talking about two specific goals I have.

This is a transition phrase. Make sure your essay has these between paragraphs so that it flows smoothly.

End the essay with a poignant phrase. Don't plagiarize!

Writing Tips and Tricks

- ⇒ Use punctuation. Please. Commas love you.
- ⇒ Use transitions. They love you too.
- ⇒ Know the difference between these words:
 - **Your** (Your studio class), **You're** (You're wonderful)
 - **There** (Over there!), **Their** (Their car), **They're** (They're nice)
 - **Its** (Its name is Fido), **It's** (It's a lovely day outside)
- ⇒ This essay is about you. Write from your perspective (i.e. "I wish to study abroad..."). Do not use the word "you"!
- ⇒ Avoid stream-of-conscious writing. This means don't write the same way that you speak or think. Stream-of-conscious writing is incoherent and difficult to follow.
- ⇒ Write concise (to-the-point) sentences.
- ⇒ Look for familiar and idiomatic phrases in your essays such as "you know," "gonna," etc. Rephrase them.
- ⇒ Ask someone who knows nothing about the program or your essay to read your essay. If they don't understand it, ask them why and rework the parts that are not clear.
- ⇒ Re-read, proofread and edit your essay before submitting it to the International Affairs Office.

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