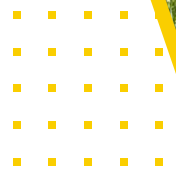




Penn Abroad



# Annual Report 2024-2025





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## Letter from the Executive Director

August 2024 marked the beginning of my second academic year leading the Penn Abroad team—and what an incredible year it has been. As I reflect on the past 12 months, I am filled with pride and gratitude for all that we have accomplished together.

Beginning with our team, we welcomed three talented new colleagues: Vania Loper and Kenna Welch as Global Programs Managers, and Sara Bembenek-Saborio as Senior Global Programs Manager. All three joined the Study Abroad team and together with their peers are supporting our largest number of Penn Abroad program participants annually.

Our physical and digital footprint also underwent a wonderful transformation this past year. In January 2025, we moved into our new home at 3935 Walnut Street where we share a modern, bright, and inviting environment with our Penn Global colleagues. The space was thoughtfully designed to reflect our global mission, featuring tech-enabled conference rooms for seamless international collaboration and versatile areas for in-person advising and student engagement. Our online presence received a fresh update as well, with the launch of our newly redesigned website in February 2025.

Programmatically, it’s been a year of growth and impact. Penn Abroad supported 1,099 students in programs abroad and welcomed 236 incoming exchange students to Penn. Study abroad continued with another high-volume spring semester, and we proudly launched a new summer term abroad for academic credit. Our research and internship programs remain highly competitive and deeply enriching. The Global Research & Internship Program (GRIP) and Penn Global Research Institutes (PGRI) continue to be among our most sought-after offerings, with acceptance rates of 29% and 40%, respectively. Finally, our Penn Global Seminars (PGS) continue to inspire students at every stage of their academic journey—from first-years to seniors—to pursue a global opportunity.

At the core of our mission are the students we serve. As I conclude this letter, I’m continually inspired by the meaningful global experiences that our remarkable team creates for Penn students each and every day. One recent participant on a PGS program to Italy captured our purpose beautifully: “Thank you for taking me further than Philadelphia. Thank you for introducing me to the world.”

Here’s to another year introducing Penn students to all corners of the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristyn Palmiotto". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kristyn Palmiotto  
Executive Director  
Penn Abroad



# Our Core Values

## Dedication to Student Development

As international educators, we deliver a wide range of program options that provide our students with rigorous and authentic experiences. We empower students to be culturally aware and engage in a globalized world through academic and co-curricular opportunities that challenge and expand their global competencies.

## Champions of Access

We work hard to ensure that Penn Abroad programs are accessible to students of all backgrounds. We connect students to relevant support services to help them navigate how their identities impact and are reflected in their global experiences.

## Innovation in Education Abroad

We provide deep expertise in our areas of focus and possess comprehensive knowledge across fields in international education. We pursue continuous learning and professional development to ensure our work reflects the highest standards locally, nationally, and globally.

## Cultivation of Meaningful Partnerships

We are well-versed in the priorities of our division and the University. With these priorities at the forefront, we honor the individual and shared efforts of our team as we develop and maintain collaborative relationships with our partners at Penn and abroad.

## Commitment to Excellence

We pursue our work in a prepared, coordinated, and strategic manner, embracing kindness and optimism in all interactions. We provide timely, accurate, and thorough guidance that is responsive to the needs of our students, partners, and each other. We are accountable for our actions and take the time to reflect on our strengths and our opportunities as a team.

# Our Team



Penn Abroad is an energetic team dedicated to providing a meaningful global experience to every Penn student. Taking a creative approach to the evolving field of education abroad, the team provides a high-touch experience to help students meet their unique academic, professional, and personal goals by providing a vibrant portfolio of global opportunities, including full term study abroad, incoming exchange, internship and research placements, and short-term programs. The team is committed to student development through education abroad, cultivating meaningful partnerships within Penn and across the world, and increasing access to global opportunities.

<b>Kristyn Palmiotto</b> Executive Director	<b>Joana Arruda</b> Global Programs Manager	<b>Camille Cropley</b> Marketing and Outreach Manager
<b>Michael Griego</b> Associate Director	<b>Clemente Garcia III</b> Global Programs Manager	<b>Zoraida Hu</b> Global Programs Coordinator
<b>Laurie Jensen</b> Associate Director	<b>Vania Loper</b> Global Programs Manager	<b>Alexander Eisenthal</b> Global Programs Assistant
<b>Greta Kazenski</b> Associate Director	<b>Yasmina Pierre</b> Global Programs Manager	<b>Tiffany Swan</b> Front Desk Coordinator
<b>Arielle Schweber</b> Associate Director	<b>Emily Plowman</b> Global Programs Manager	<b>Miquela Berge</b> Graduate Assistant
<b>Sara Bembenek-Saborio</b> Senior Global Programs Manager	<b>Kenna Welch</b> Global Programs Manager	<b>Angela Nguyen</b> Graduate Assistant

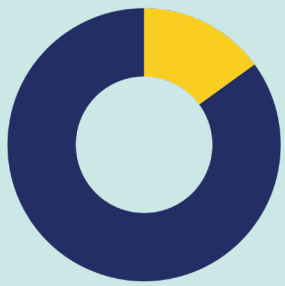


# Year in Review

**1,099** Penn students participated in a Penn Abroad program in **53** different countries, including:



38% of Penn Abroad participants receive financial aid



Among students receiving financial aid, 15% are Highly Aided

**18**

Penn students travelled to Mexico City on the Penn Global Seminar *Before Netflix: The Past and Present of Latin American Television*

**595**

- 199 in the U.K.
- 86 in Spain
- 65 in France
- 44 in Portugal
- 37 in the Netherlands
- 36 in Italy
- 20 in Germany
- 17 in Ireland
- 16 in Bulgaria
- 14 in Belgium
- 13 in Austria
- 10 or fewer in Sweden, Greece, Hungary and Switzerland

**3**

Penn students spent a semester abroad in Jordan

**224**

- 45 in China
- 44 in Japan
- 31 in Singapore
- 26 in Hong Kong
- 32 in India
- 16 in Mongolia
- 10 or fewer in South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Armenia, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, and Nepal

**4**

Penn students participated in GRIP internships in Taiwan

**74**

- 17 in Egypt
- 16 in Malawi
- 15 in South Africa
- 15 in Uganda
- 5 or fewer in Zimbabwe, the Gambia, Ghana and Tunisia

**149**

- 43 in Argentina
- 33 in Mexico
- 11 in Colombia
- 6 in Ecuador
- 5 or fewer in Uruguay, Chile, Guatemala, Cuba and the Dominican Republic

**81**

- 72 in Australia
- 9 in New Zealand





# Study Abroad

Penn Abroad’s Study Abroad (SA) portfolio allows students to take coursework and earn credit at a host institution abroad for a term or a year. Participation in SA in the 2024 – 2025 academic year remained on par with the previous year with 584 total students. There was a significant increase in students who participated in Study Abroad programs in Asia at 52 students, a 40% increase from the 2023 – 2024 academic year. Hong Kong is quickly regaining its pre-pandemic footing as a favorite destination for Penn students; Chinese University of Hong Kong received 15 students in Spring 2025. The Middle East and North Africa region, impacted by ongoing war and political instability, saw a 50% reduction in students abroad this past year.

The 2024 – 2025 academic year ushered in several new program options for Penn students, expanding access geographically and academically. The Bologna Consortial Studies Program (BCSP) will now offer an English track approved for engineering credit, giving SEAS students an additional option for study in Europe. Two new programs in Beijing were approved for College students looking to improve their Chinese-language skills. Further, with the approval of Ashoka University, located near New Delhi, Hindi-target students in the Huntsman program now have the ability to fulfill the study abroad requirement of their degree program in their target region. Penn Abroad also sent its first cohort to BU Madrid. With this addition, Penn Abroad now has an approved option for students in the College to study in the Spanish capital and one of Europe’s most popular destinations. Most notably, the SA team followed through on a longstanding initiative to launch a summer term for credit abroad. Leveraging existing exchange agreements with the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Summer Term Abroad was available for Wharton and Engineering students for its pilot year.

584

Total Committed Students

817

Students Attended In-Person Advising

## Volume Up!

Study Abroad has long been the cornerstone of Penn Abroad’s programming and serves the largest number of students per year. In the 2024 – 2025 academic year, the enrollment gap between the fall and spring terms grew tremendously, with 75% of students opting to participate in the spring term. This imbalance, as well as the growing demand for term-length programs, has put a strain on all aspects of the study abroad infrastructure—in particular, the application process and housing options. Imbalanced volume translated to increased program competitiveness for students studying abroad in the spring semester. To even the playing field, the SA team instituted application caps on all programs. These caps limit the total number of applications an individual program can receive per semester and ensure that students have a reasonable opportunity for acceptance. The SA team also responded to consistent student feedback requesting assistance with housing in two key ways: first, the team allowed students to connect with each other earlier in the application cycle so that they could find housing together. Second, Penn Abroad partnered with two third-party housing providers in key program sites—Madrid and Barcelona—to secure housing on behalf of Penn students studying in these locations. Students could choose to live in one of these housing options at a negotiated rate or secure their own housing independently. While the housing initiatives in Spain will not return next year, the SA team will continue to research ways to facilitate the housing search in locations where it can be particularly challenging, such as Dublin, Milan, and Sydney.

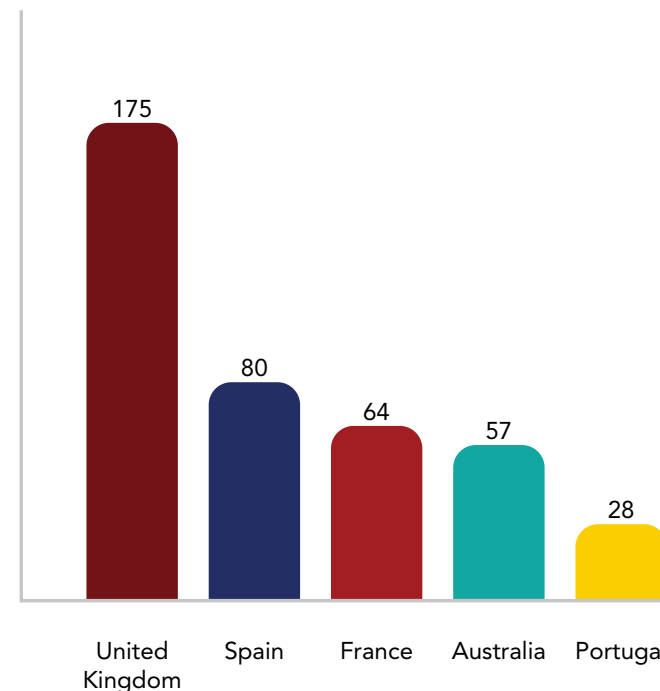
## Summer Term

Summer Term Abroad saw early success with the launch of the pilot program in the 2025 cycle. Although the SA team had originally anticipated launching the program with three partner universities, which would include an opportunity for students from the College of Arts and Sciences to participate, the plans shifted to bring in the College in the coming year. Ultimately, seven students participated in the pilot year of the program—three to CUHK and four to CBS—out of 11 total applicants. Maintaining Penn Abroad’s commitment to access and through collaboration with our campus partners, participating aid-eligible students received funding awards to help off-set the cost of a summer term abroad.

### Top 5 Majors of Study Abroad Students

- 151 Finance
- 80 Politics, Philosophy, Economics
- 43 International Studies (Huntsman Program)
- 40 Political Science
- 38 Cognitive Science

### Top Locations by Number of Students



Joaquin Hernandez, Summer Term: Chinese University of Hong Kong

## Looking Ahead

As the 2025 – 2026 academic year begins, the SA team will introduce significant changes to application process, including the introduction of an advising application which students open themselves. In this new program, students will complete mandatory learning modules covering information such as XCAT, finances, and the application process. Students will also attend a mandatory regional advising session with their Global Programs Manager to receive site-specific guidance. Selective programs will continue to maintain a lower application cap and will have earlier deadlines than the rest of the portfolio to allow time to complete selection committees. As travel to Russia remains limited, the team will continue to work towards expanded and refined programming in Russian-speaking locations to meet the needs of Huntsman participants and other students with an interest in the language. Finally, after Penn’s longstanding partner in Cuba—IFSA—decided to shutter their program at the end of the 2024 – 2025 academic year, SA staff will start to consider replacements and unveil a new offering in that country soon.

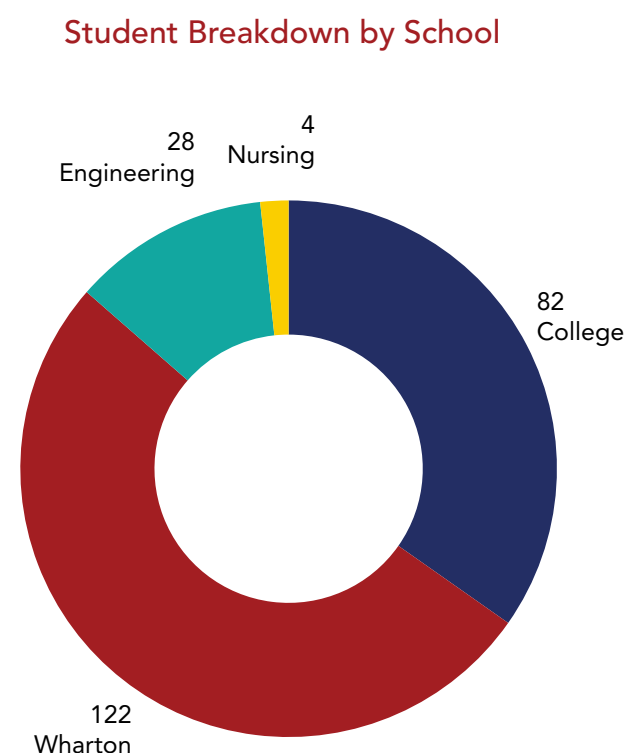
The Summer Term Abroad program will add new partners for 2026—Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (for Wharton and Engineering credit) and Seoul National University (for College credit). CUHK will also begin offering College credit, and CBS will remain available for Wharton credit. The team anticipates a higher volume of applicants and committed participants with the addition of College and Nursing student eligibility.





# Exchange at Penn

The Exchange at Penn (EAP) program partners with institutions around the globe and collaborates with Penn's four undergraduate Schools to offer incoming exchange students the opportunity to study on the Philadelphia campus and earn credit across academic disciplines and programs. The EAP program welcomed 236 students to Penn across the 2024 – 2025 academic year, up from 221 last year. 21% of these students opted to study at Penn for an entire academic year, and Wharton continued to receive the largest percentage of exchange students at just over 50%.



## Leaning In

EAP students threw themselves into life at Penn, engaging in a wide variety of clubs and organizations such as the rock-climbing club and ski team, arts and dance groups like Kbeats and Penn Wind Ensemble, community service opportunities like the West Philadelphia Tutoring Project and academic clubs like Wharton Undergrad Finance Club and Penn Aerial Robotics. Academically, there was a high demand for courses that have historically been challenging to register for, such as Finance and Computer Science. While some students experienced challenges adjusting to life in Philadelphia and their studies at Penn, the EAP team worked closely with campus partners to ensure that students connected in with the appropriate supports. Changes to the US Presidential administration brought with it uncertainties related to travel, entry into the US, and visa approval. The EAP team strengthened their relationship with International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) to ensure that they were giving students the appropriate guidance for staying safe and compliant during their time here. A close collaboration with the Office of the University Registrar yielded a new process for exchange student transcript ordering, allowing for a timelier and more straightforward route for receiving this document.

## Highlights and Challenges

- » Joined with the International Guest Student Program (IGSP) to welcome over 250 new visiting international undergrads during the New Student Orientation in the fall and over 150 new students in the spring.
- » EAP and IGSP continued their collaboration with Penn Recreation, facilitating special opportunities for visiting students to see a football and basketball game with a special shoutout to them.
- » Excursions included a trip to Ocean City, NJ, a visit to Amish country in Pennsylvania, a hike in the Wissahickon, and a Phillies game.
- » Six EAP Correspondents posted blogs and social media content about their experience and organized activities throughout the year for their EAP peers and classmates.

### Top 5 Sending Institutions

- 1 Comillas Pontifical University (ICADE), Spain
- 2 Bocconi University, Italy
- 3 University of Sydney, Australia
- 4 Ramon Llull University (ESADE), Spain
- 5 King's College London, United Kingdom

## Looking Ahead

As the 2025 – 2026 academic year begins, the EAP team anticipates challenges to on-time arrival to the US resulting from the pause of student visa interview appointments globally over summer 2025. They will work closely with Schools to coordinate student arrival information and expectations to accommodate students as best as possible. Additionally, responding to continued uncertainties related to travel, the team will double-down their partnership with ISSS to ensure that students are supported and receive clear, up-to-date communication. In an effort to foster closer relationships among the cohort, Penn Abroad will unveil a Canvas site exclusively for exchange students. Through this site, students will be able to review pre-arrival instructions, connect with the EAP team and with one another, and receive continued updates and information throughout the semester.



Spring 2025 Global Correspondent Hugo Leung



Spring 2025 Global Correspondent Jessica Li



# Sawiris Penn Scholars Program

Built on the foundation of the academically rigorous and culturally immersive Exchange at Penn program, the Sawiris Penn Scholars Program provides the opportunity for a select group of students from an Egyptian university to attend Penn for an academic year with full financial support. The program enjoyed another successful year – its third – by welcoming five students from Ain Shams University in Cairo. For the first time, the Sawiris Penn Scholars Program accepted third-year students into the cohort which had the roll-on effect of expanding the types of courses taken at Penn. While the program continues to face challenges related to diversifying course enrollments due to the strict curricular needs of the students, the number of unique course enrollments rose by 25% from the previous year. All of the scholars continued to excel in their coursework, maintaining excellent performance in their classes.

## Sawiris by the Numbers



3 Electrical and Systems Engineering Majors

2 Architectural Engineering Majors



Sawiris students visit the Penn Washington Center



2024-2025 Sawiris cohort on Penn campus

“At Penn, I had to adapt quickly to a different academic system, manage everything on my own, and interact daily in English. I made close friends from different countries, and explored cultural events on and off campus. That balance between academic growth and real-world exposure made my experience stand out.”

-2024-2025 Sawiris Penn Scholar

## Looking Ahead

The Sawiris Penn Scholars team looks forward to welcoming a new cohort of five students in the 2025 – 2026 academic year. This will be the final year of accepting students from the five-year program at Ain Shams. Moving forward, the program will only be accepting students that will be in their third year of the new four-year Ain Shams curriculum. As the program has developed, it has become evident that research and pre-professional opportunities outside the classroom would be valuable to this population during their time at Penn. Penn Abroad will be working to integrate these activities into future cohorts by expanding collaborations both on- and off-campus. Additionally, in keeping with the program’s vision, the Sawiris Penn Scholars team will pursue plans to expand recruitment to include additional Egyptian universities and student disciplines with the hopes of diversifying the cohort even further.

## Program Highlights

- » Held robust pre-orientation that was re-envisioned after last year’s cancellation due to travel delays.
- » Sawiris Scholars engaged outside of the classroom with student organizations including the chess club and the West Philadelphia Tutoring Project.
- » Set up engineering students with an academic advisor in the School of Engineering and Applied Science to better facilitate course enrollment and address registration challenges.
- » Cohort enrolled in 24 unique courses over six disciplines, including Architecture, Computer Science, Electrical and Systems Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Mathematics, and Physics.



Sawiris students on New York City excursion





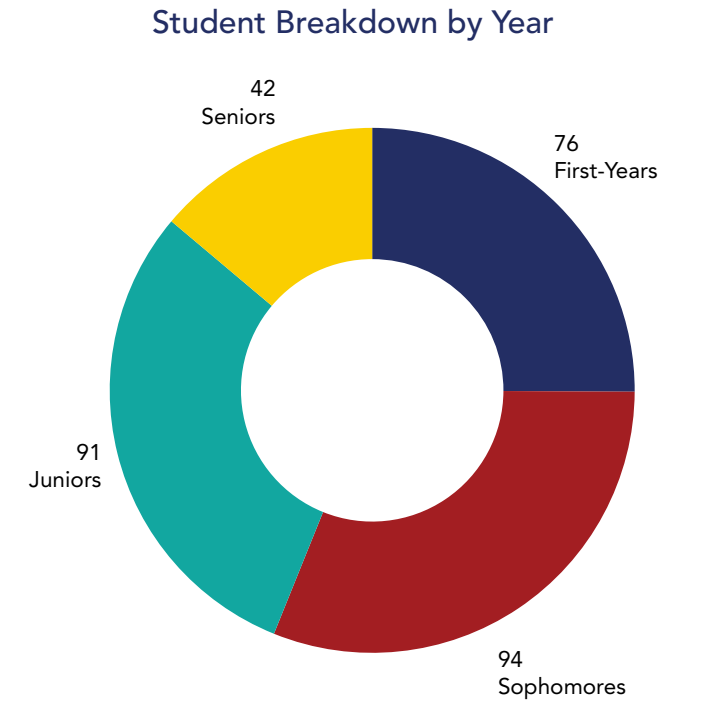
# Penn Global Seminars

Penn Global Seminars (PGS) combine intensive semester-long study with a short-term travel component. In academic year 2024 – 2025, Penn Abroad continued to grow the PGS program by offering 18 courses, 11 of which were brand new to the portfolio. Not only was this the largest number of courses offered in a single academic year, but the travel locations also continued to diversify. New program sites included Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Malawi, and Mexico. The PGS program accommodated 303 students across these courses, an increase of 7% from the previous year. Once again, maintaining the momentum from 2023 – 2024, all four undergraduate Schools rostered at least one course during the year.



## Program Highlights

- » Penn Global Seminars faculty cultivated high-profile partnerships within the travel destination of their course which led to incredible site visits, including with the President of Bulgaria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense in Japan, and a television studio in Mexico City.
- » Several Schools, programs, and departments were able to offer a Penn Global Seminar for the very first time, including Cinema and Media Studies, Sociology, Annenberg School for Communication, and Philosophy, Politics, & Economics.
- » Collaboration with the Chaplain’s office yielded an enhanced approach to supporting students abroad with spiritual commitments, including the development of guidelines and expectations for travel.
- » Two courses traveled to the Netherlands and utilized bicycles as their primary means of transportation, highlighting both the incredible infrastructure of the country as well as the opportunities to create a more climate-friendly and sustainable society.



Students on PGS Bicycles: The Mechanical Advantage

## Increased Demand

The Penn Global Seminars program has experienced a steady uptick in both student and faculty demand since its inception a decade ago. More recently, that uptick has become a surge: between the 2023 – 2024 and 2024 – 2025 academic years, applications grew 19%, from 1,217 to 1,445. This has resulted in a lower acceptance rate than ever before and the program has been forced to turn away most interested students. To counter this issue, as well as to meet its goal of rostering 20 courses per year by 2028, the PGS team made a call for proposals in summer 2024 that was intended to cultivate courses for both the 2025 – 2026 and 2026 – 2027 academic years. This was the first time a call yielded a multi-year portfolio, and it had the benefit of both allowing for longer-term planning as well as ensuring a balance between academic disciplines, locations, and travel periods.

## Number of Students by Region



## Looking Ahead

The 2025 – 2026 academic year holds special meaning for the Penn Global Seminars program. Penn Abroad will be celebrating PGS’s 10-year anniversary in Spring 2026! This milestone is particularly significant because the team will have achieved the goal of offering 20 courses in a single year as laid out in the Penn Global Strategic Framework. The hard work of the PGS team, faculty leaders, staff leaders, and partners has all played a part in realizing this vision. Penn Abroad will usher in the second decade of PGS programming with an assortment of new program sites, including the Dominican Republic, Taiwan, and Vietnam.





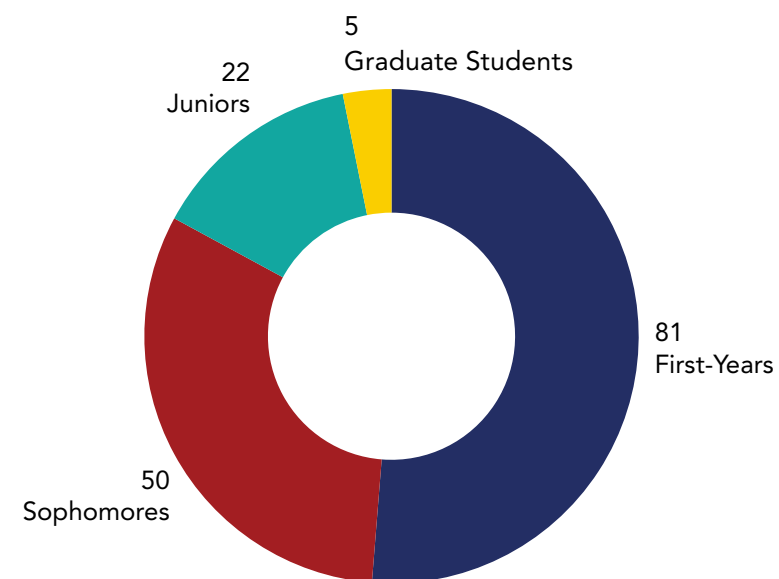
# Global Research & Internship Program

The Global Research & Internship Program (GRIP) offers undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to intern or conduct research with a variety of organizations and companies abroad over the summer. 158 exceptional students completed a GRIP placement during the summer 2025 cycle. Building off of the success of the application cap system introduced in 2024, the GRIP team refined the caps to more accurately reflect the total number of students who would be selected for each placement. This decision was extremely successful and resulted in several placements closing well before the overall GRIP deadline. The team was able to expedite the review of those placements' applications and give the employers more time to select their students. However, these positive outcomes were balanced by some negative experiences. As immigration issues unfolded over the course of the spring semester, some students chose to switch to a different program site, defer their participation, or withdraw entirely.

## ✦ Strong and Steady

The summer 2025 cycle of the GRIP program yielded 695 applications and 158 total participants. These numbers were nearly identical to summer 2024, indicating a consistency of demand for the program year-over-year. While first-year students continue to dominate the program at just over 50% of the cohort, third-year students and graduate students experienced a boost in numbers compared to 2024. The GRIP team leveraged the current stability to reinforce the most successful policies and procedures which have led to the program's success. Program modifications included a clarification of remote work and time off policies, declining any requests to extend the commitment deadline, and shifting deadlines across the cycle to more ideal dates. These tweaks yielded the smoothest admission cycle in the team's memory. In an effort to improve student support both before and during travel, the team also introduced a connectivity requirement, mandating that students have a working cell phone to communicate while abroad. Additionally, expanded visa guidance during the application and pre-departure phases prompted students to apply for a visa earlier and take into consideration other travel plans. In terms of student trends, homesickness, difficulty adjusting, lack of communication, and professionalism issues prevailed while abroad. However, there were overall fewer and less extreme incident reports during summer 2025 than in summer 2024.

Student Breakdown by Year



# 158

Total Committed Students

# 169

Accepted Applications

# 695

Submitted Applications

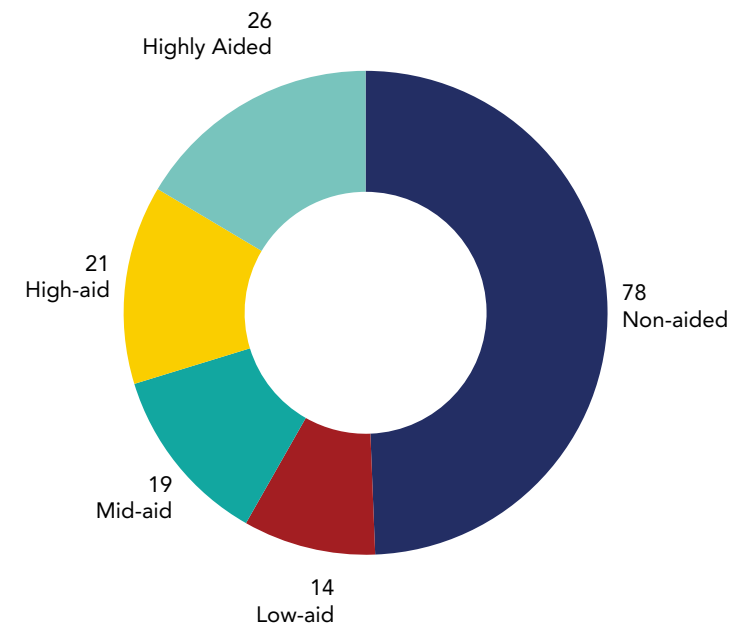
## Key Milestones & Achievements

- » Three new placements were added to the portfolio this year, including internships with Taipei's City Government and Eurolife FFH, an insurance company based in Athens, Greece. An engineering research placement exclusively for master's students at the School of Engineering and Applied Science launched with the University of Auckland. Additionally, the existing KK Fund internship placement was relocated from Singapore to Taipei, Taiwan.
- » Increased financial contributions from the Freeman Foundation and the Huntsman Program in International Business allowed for an average funding award of \$5,776 per student. For the first time in several years, students received their funding award via the Penn Marketplace rather than the ClinCard system.
- » In response to common questions and concerns received by accepted students, the GRIP team created a post-acceptance video that outlined and reinforced key program details to help students make an informed decision before committing to the program.
- » The GRIP summer newsletter continues to receive positive feedback, especially from employers who feel more connected to the program by receiving regular program highlights.



Kithya Borey, GRIP: Sustainable Development in Monteverde, Costa Rica

Number of Students by Aid Level



# \$5,776

Average Funding Award

## Looking Ahead

The GRIP team anticipates that summer 2026 will look very similar to summer 2025 and will target 160 participants for the next cycle. While there are possibilities to cultivate a small number of new placements, the portfolio will remain overall consistent with the summer 2025 offerings. The GRIP team will take advantage of this period of stability to build out several process efficiencies, such as a streamlined collection of employer information, job descriptions, and admission decisions. Additionally, the team anticipates launching a new process for collecting expressions of interest from prospective employers. This system will allow for a more strategic growth of the program by recruiting for and identifying appropriate placements at an earlier stage and managing expectations as the relationship is developed.

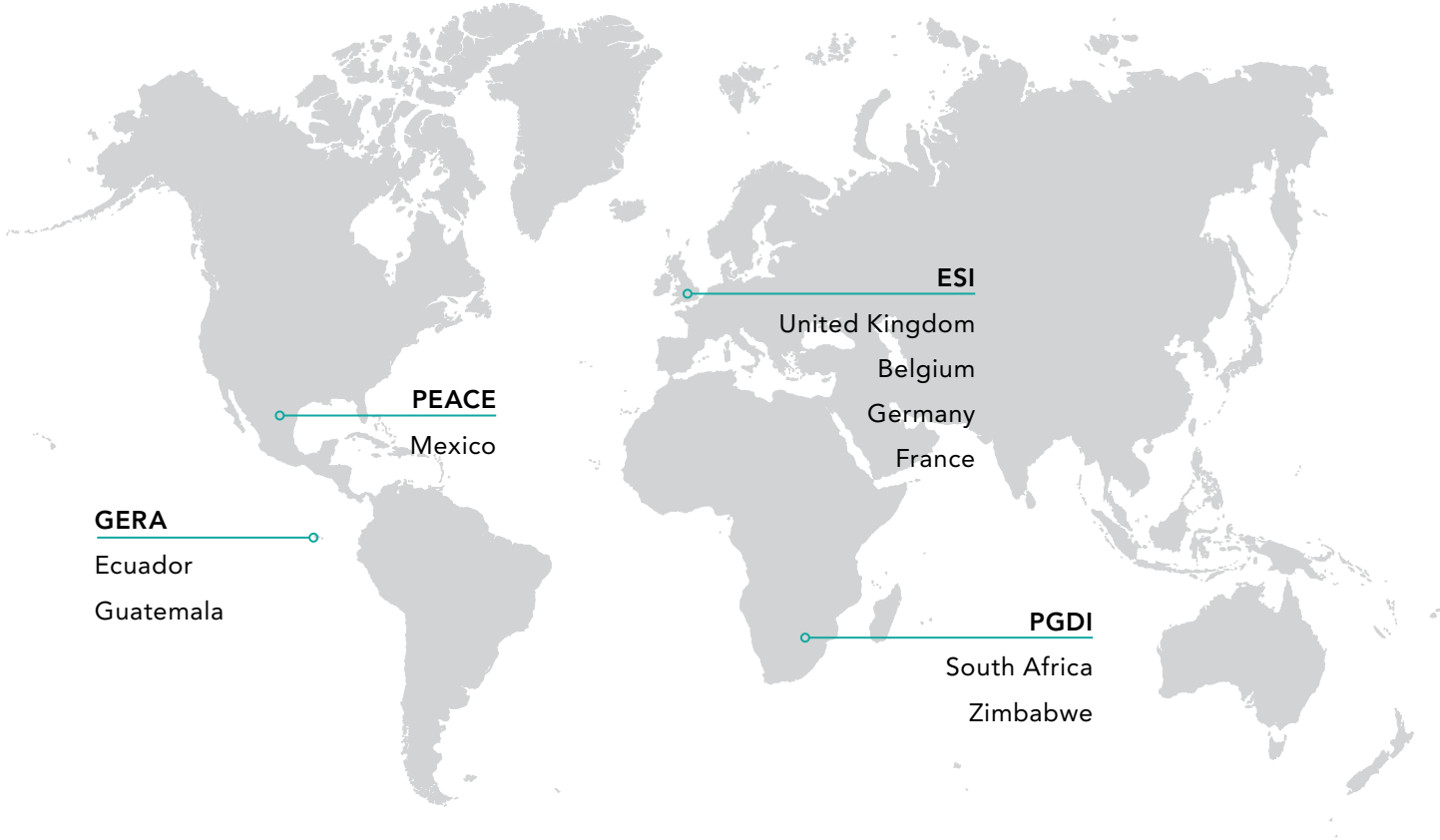


# Penn Global Research Institutes

The Penn Global Research Institutes (PGRI) program provides outstanding undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to conduct research and fieldwork abroad alongside Penn faculty. Students work as part of a small research team made up of fellow students, Penn faculty, and local community members and researchers to address major global challenges. While the PGRI program remained steady at 4 institutes during the 2024 – 2025 academic year, the number of students served grew 43% from the previous year. As each institute shifted in structure in response to community needs, this in turn increased access to the program by students. For example, the Penn Educational Alliance for Change & Equity (PEACE) grew from five participants in 2023 - 2024 to 12 participants this year, more than doubling this size of its student impact. Graduate student representation jumped by 400% in the 2024 – 2025 academic year, furthering Penn Global’s mission of expanding opportunities for graduate students.



## Countries Travelled by Institute



European Studies Institute

### Student Participants by Institute

- 12 Penn Educational Alliance for Change & Equity
- 9 Galapagos Education & Research Alliance
- 7 European Studies Institute
- 5 Penn Global Documentary Institute

## Looking Ahead

In the 2025 – 2026 academic year, Penn Global will guide two of the institutes through the funding renewal process to obtain support for a further three-year cycle. This second round of support will ensure that the institutes remain deeply rooted in their host communities and have an opportunity to follow through on their individual missions. The renewal process also gives faculty PIs the opportunity to assess the efficacy of their approach and the impact of their work thus far in order to make changes or realignments in the future cycle. Penn Global will not make a Call for Proposals for new institutes in the next academic year and will instead focus on supporting the current four.

## Program Highlights

- » The European Studies Institute (ESI) is the only institute that holds its fieldwork period over winter break. In January 2025, the research team conducted its first travel component which spanned four countries and included a conference at King’s College London, visits to the European Parliament and NATO headquarters, and meetings with a variety of experts on the Ukraine war. By the conclusion of their time in the institute in April 2025, each of the seven undergraduate fellows completed a senior thesis on a topic related to geopolitics in Europe.
- » In response to evolving community needs, the Galapagos Education and Research Alliance (GERA) expanded to locations outside of the Galapagos Islands for the first time. Small research teams made site visits to three separate locations—San Cristobal in the Galapagos, Santa Catalina on the Ecuadorian mainland, and El Gariton on the Pacific coast of Guatemala.
- » The Penn Global Documentary Institute (PGDI) took a three-week road trip through South Africa and Zimbabwe tracing the history and culture of the Lemba people. Their work will develop into several multimedia outputs, including films, photos, and oral interviews. The topic for summer 2025 added another dimension to the institute’s ongoing theme of Jewish Communities in Africa, which also includes work done on the Abayudaya of Uganda by the 2024 PGDI program and an affiliated Penn Global Seminar in fall 2024.
- » Following through on their mission to be a truly bilateral experience, the PEACE institute hosted a bi-national conference on Penn’s campus in October 2024. PEACE colleagues from the University of Guadalajara and its affiliated schools in Mexico traveled to Philadelphia for two days of sessions, discussion, and networking. Undergraduate and graduate fellows of the institute had the opportunity to present posters detailing the outcomes of their research and suggested next steps for future participants.

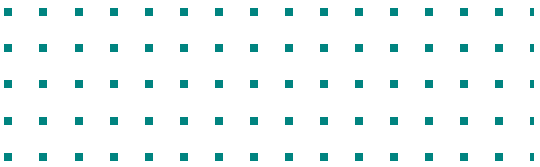


# Student Engagement

Building on a strong foundation of student leadership and ambassadorial opportunities, PA101 presentations, and signature events, Penn Abroad leveraged a new physical and virtual presence to roll out a fresh student engagement strategy for the 2024 – 2025 academic year.

## @ A Major Rebrand

Penn Global embarked on two major projects—a new website and a new office—which concluded simultaneously in early 2025. The website migration was a massive undertaking that involved reorganizing content to better meet the needs of students, faculty, and partners and involved close collaboration with colleagues across Penn Global and the web vendor. The new website provides a fresh new look and feel for Penn Abroad stakeholders and opportunities for easier blog posting, event marketing, and efficient navigation. The Penn Abroad office is a new construction located at 3935 Walnut Street and is shared by International Student and Scholar Services, Global Initiatives, and the Penn Global Business Office. Staff members of Career Services and University Life occupy other floors of the building. The new space includes many gorgeous meeting rooms as well as a multi-use space that can accommodate large events, such as group advising, pre-departure orientations, info sessions, and send-off celebrations.



Penn Abroad’s new building

## Student Engagement by the Numbers

367

Penn Abroad Fair Attendees



87 Ambassadors



34 students received a fully funded passport through the Penn Abroad Passport Drive



7 PA101 Info sessions across campus, including collaborative sessions with P1P & PennCAP



41 students shared their experiences abroad as Global Correspondents

124

blogs posted to the Penn Abroad website

# Creative Solutions

Over the course of the 2024 – 2025 academic year, the student engagement team refined their approach to marketing and events in a way that responded to student feedback, maximized participation, and accommodated new budgeting practices. These creative solutions included the following:

- » Penn Abroad launched a dedicated Exchange at Penn Instagram account which will advertise events, deadlines, and opportunities targeting the exchange student population on Penn’s campus. The new collaboration feature on Instagram allows posts to show up on two accounts, so EAP students will continue to be featured on the main PA Instagram.
- » Penn Abroad partnered with the Greenfield Intercultural Center to pilot a BIPOC student panel twice this year. While registration was limited, the team used this as an opportunity to reassess student needs and identified that panels are most impactful during pre-departure orientation. Moving forward, collaborative events will exclusively feature PA 101 programming to maximize engagement and relevance.
- » In response to university-wide budget restrictions in 2025, Penn Abroad implemented creative cost-saving measures across its operations. The student engagement team adapted by redesigning event strategies—shifting away from catering and giveaways—while maintaining strong participation. These adjustments demonstrated both fiscal responsibility and the continued commitment to delivering meaningful experiences, as student turnout remained high through the spring semester.



Hanxi Guo, featured on new EAP Instagram account



2024 Penn Abroad Fair



Produced by: Penn Abroad  
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### Front Cover Images:

Top Left: Florence Oniyuke, Semester Abroad at CASA Barcelona: Spanish Universities Program

Top Right: Avia Weber, Spring 2025 Penn Global Seminar European Foreign and Security Policy in Times of Crisis with travel to Bulgaria

Bottom: Will Kelly, Spring 2025 Penn Global Seminar Mongolian Civilization: Nomadic and Sedentary with travel to Mongolia

Icons from [Noun Project](#): loud by ramacae (page 8); Maple Leaf by Hary Murdiono JS, Spring by FA Studio, Calendar by sugeng riyanto, pisa by rivercon (page 10); students by designvector (page 12); growth by Pandu Bramantyo (page 15); Anchor by M. Adebadaal (page 16); Book by Maulina Vitria Ulfa (page 18); rebranding by Tithy, Social Media by agus raharjo, presentation by Liberus PJ, talk by Marie Van den Broeck, Passports by Adrien Coquet (page 20)



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