The Program

The BISP program offers students the opportunity to take courses across a broad range of discipline areas within the Arts & Humanities offerings at UC Berkeley. From ancient times to the present day, people around the globe have raised fundamental questions about life through the arts, literature, and philosophy. Powered by the BISP advantage, visiting students will have the opportunity to explore the human experience across an exceptionally broad range of subjects.

The Berkeley International Study Program provides study abroad opportunities on a space availability basis for visiting international students to study at UC Berkeley for one or two semesters. BISP students pay fees to the UC Berkeley Extension office, who also provide the necessary student visa documents and infrastructure needed to earn credit in UC Berkeley courses that may transfer back to visiting international students' home university.

Eligibility and Criteria

Students must complete an individual interview in order to ensure that they are a good match for what our program offers. It is important to us that students are able to take courses in the departments in our program, as it is not an exact fit for everyone. Students from a non-English speaking university must demonstrate their English proficiency with a TOEFL (90 or higher) or IELTS (7.0 or higher) test score.

BISP welcomes students that come on their own (as an independent, or "freemover" student), as well as those that come through our partner universities to apply for our program. For more information, please visit http://bisp.berkeley.edu/programs/

Opportunities for graduate students are available in some of the participating departments. These options can include graduate-level lectures or seminars, advanced undergraduate seminars, and independent research for academic credit. Coursework is available for visiting students in a number of participating departments, giving students the opportunity to study courses related to their major, those that meet their personal interests, or those that they would not otherwise have the chance to take at their home university.
UC Berkeley offers instruction in 59 languages across 14 departments – for a complete list, see http://b1c.berkeley.edu/languages/. Our language courses emphasize speaking, listening, reading, and writing at all levels, starting on the first day of instruction. Some languages are taught in specific semesters, so it’s important to plan your study abroad experience carefully if you are interested in a specific language. Contact BISP early to make sure your semester plan matches when our courses are offered.

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"One of the greatest feelings I’ve had since arriving was the excitement of working between bookshelves and bookshelves of music theory and harmony books. I never heard of the existence of a music library until I came to Berkeley."

Mercedes Montemayor Elosúa, Digital Music Production Engineering student, Tecnologico de Monterrey (ITESM), Mexico