# **ASSIST IN PREPARING STUDENTS TO STUDY ABROAD**

Preparing to study abroad is an exciting endeavor filled with high expectations, questions, and perhaps anxiety. As TRIO staff, your guidance and support are crucial in helping students navigate this transformative experience. Here are seven things you can do to assist your students as they prepare for their study-abroad adventure:

1. **Explain the role of COE**: Provide students with a comprehensive understanding of COE and its study abroad programs. emphasize that these programs are designed in collaboration with partners who understand the concerns of first-generation and low-income students about going abroad. Highlight COE's commitment to maintaining a homogeneous group of TRIO low-income, first-generation students as the foundation of its program. Additionally, ensure that students understand how COE represents TRIO and their interests. Share key information about COE, including its establishment in 1981 and its dedication to expanding college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities nationwide. Reiterate COE's vision that every young person and adult deserves an equal opportunity to prepare for, attend, and graduate from college.
2. **Teach goal setting**: Encourage students to set clear and achievable goals for their study abroad experience. Explain the importance of goal setting in giving them autonomy and control over their learning journey. Stress the significance of consistency, self-awareness, and honesty in this process, as these qualities will guide students toward meaningful outcomes.
3. **Set up research opportunities**: Encourage students to research their study abroad destination. Promote exploration of the destination's history, culture, cuisine, language, landmarks, cities, notable figures, music, and more. Encourage students to immerse themselves in learning about their destination to enhance their appreciation and understanding of the culture they will encounter.
4. **Increase excitement**: Foster enthusiasm among participants by allowing them to share their research findings and experiences. Encourage students to participate in presentations in your program, on your campus, and at state and regional conferences whenever possible. These platforms allow students to showcase their knowledge, insights, and reflections, igniting excitement and anticipation for their upcoming study abroad experience.

By following these steps, you can effectively support and empower your students as they embark on their study abroad journey, ensuring a fulfilling and enriching experience for all involved.

**Don't forget the practical.** Besides preparation for academic success, your students will need to know how to:

* Identify and apply for scholarships to study abroad.
* Develop budget for dining and other living expenses.
* Pay close attention to dates and meeting deadlines.
* Apply for a passport and any applicable visa.
* Complete medical requirements.
* Prepare an emergency contact list.
* Confirm transportation and housing.
* Pay fees and deposits.
* Plan considering commitments at home, i.e., rent, etc.
* Ensure plans are in order.
* Print backup copies of important documents, including I.D., passport, visa, acceptance letters, insurance coverage, prescriptions, etc.
* Obtain enough prescriptions for the duration of the program.
* Consider exchange rates and exchange fees.
* Identify an international phone plan to maintain communication.
* Confirm airline and arrival arrangements.
* Drink plenty of water and build up their immune system.
* Pack light, consider items in carry, and dress appropriately.
* Find and introduce themselves to the faculty and other students.
* Work through homesickness.

**Host a Q-and-A session.** Have other students, faculty, or staff from your school already traveled abroad? Invite them to have a round-table question and answer session with your students, in which they can talk about what they wish they had known, and your TRIO participants can pepper them with questions.

**Work on listening skills.** While overseas, your students will be spending far more time than ever before actively listening to native speakers. If prepared, the experience can be smooth and manageable. Set students up for success by encouraging them to do more listening activities from authentic material (such as lectures, podcasts, news reports, etc.) to get familiar with their host culture.