

Is College Abroad Right for My Kid?

A Decision Framework for Parents

This tool is designed to help you think through whether studying abroad is a genuine fit for your student right now — not just financially or logistically, but developmentally. For each statement, select the number that best describes your student, then add up your score at the end.

1. Independence & Self-Direction

My student initiates tasks and follows through without reminders.

They don't need to be told twice — or three times.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student manages their own schedule, deadlines, and commitments.

They own their calendar, not you.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student can advocate for themselves with teachers, coaches, or other adults.

They speak up when they need help or have questions.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Section Total: /15

2. Developmental Readiness

My student handles setbacks, disappointments, or stressful situations without falling apart.

They can recover — maybe not immediately, but they get there.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student has a stable, emerging sense of who they are and what they value.

They're figuring it out, but there's a foundation there.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student is comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty, and being outside their comfort zone.

New situations feel like challenges, not threats.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Section Total: /15

3. Academic Profile & Direction

My student has a strong, consistent academic track record.

Most international systems are credential-driven — GPA and rigor matter most.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student has a clear area of interest or an intended field of study.

In most countries, you apply to a program, not just a university. Undecided is rarely an option.

☐ 1 Rarely ☒ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Section Total: /10

4. Student Life & Support Needs

My student is socially self-sufficient — they can build community in new environments.

They don't rely heavily on existing social structures or need a built-in friend group.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student does not heavily depend on structured advising, tutoring centers, or campus support systems.

International universities often offer far less hand-holding than U.S. schools.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Section Total: / 10

5. Practical Fit

My student (or our family) has a genuine connection to or interest in living in another country.

A personal tie, language interest, or cultural draw — not just a vague idea of adventure.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Our family's total budget is realistic for studying abroad, including travel home.

Lower tuition doesn't always mean lower total cost — factor in flights, housing, and healthcare.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

My student's intended field does not require U.S.-specific licensure or credential recognition.

Medicine, law, and some engineering fields may require additional steps when returning to the U.S.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Section Total: / 15

6. Long-Term Vision

My student is open to the possibility of working or staying abroad after graduation.

Post-study work visas exist in many countries — but only if the student wants to use them.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Our family is emotionally prepared for a student who might build roots outside the U.S.

At least temporarily. This is worth talking about before applying, not after.

☐ 1 Rarely ☐ 2 Sometimes ☐ 3 Often ☐ 4 Usually ☐ 5 Almost Always /5

Section Total: / 10

TOTAL SCORE: / **75**

How to Read Your Score

Score	What It Means	What to Do Next
60–75	Strong candidate	Start researching programs, visit virtually, talk to your student about next steps.
44–59	Worth exploring with eyes open	Look at which categories scored low. Those are the conversations to have first.
28–43	Proceed with caution	Not a no — but there are real gaps to address before this makes sense.
Below 28	Not the right fit right now	That's okay. Come back to this in a year. Development is not linear.

A note on this tool: No score tells the whole story. A student who scores 35 but has a specific country connection, a clear major, and parents who are emotionally ready might be a better candidate than a student who scores 65 but is undecided and hasn't spent a night away from home. Use this as a starting point for conversation — not a verdict.

Want to talk through what this means for your specific student?

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