

FAQs for German Off-Campus Studies Programs

1. I am a German major/German Studies concentrator and I know I want to study abroad in Germany. How do I decide when and for how long to study abroad? Should I go my second, third, or fourth year? For an entire academic year, or for only a semester? Fall or spring?

Most, but not all, St. Olaf students study abroad during their junior year. This is a good time because during their first two years on campus, they have acquired a good base in the liberal arts and have begun work in one or more majors. While abroad, they will be able to take intermediate- or advanced-level courses in German and in other disciplines. Juniors who are German majors or German Studies concentrators will likely have completed one or more 250-level courses, which would enable them to take advantage of courses taught in German in Flensburg and Konstanz on German culture/literature and in other disciplines. Upon return to St. Olaf their senior year, they will be well prepared for 270- and 370-level courses offered in the German Department and 300-level courses in other St. Olaf departments.

While it is possible to study abroad fall semester of the senior year, it is not possible to study abroad during spring semester. Students who test into at least German 231 their first year could study abroad their second year, but to do so would require substantial advanced planning ahead of arriving at St. Olaf in order to make the application in December of their first semester on campus.

The decision about whether to study abroad for an entire year or for only a semester depends on several factors. One factor is your choice of major(s). If you have a second major in addition to German that is in a discipline that you will not be able to study easily for transfer credit in Germany or if your second major has a highly sequential curriculum, then you will likely be limited to a single semester of study abroad. If your second major is one that you can study easily for transfer credit in Germany, then you should speak with a faculty member in that department and find out exactly how much credit toward that major you might be able to earn in Germany. Language and cultural immersion are always beneficial, and the longer the period of immersion the better. So, a year-long study abroad experience is ideal, but a semester-long one has significant benefits as well. And, if neither a full year nor a semester is possible, then a one-month intensive Interim experience is an excellent option.

The pluses and minuses of fall semester abroad vs. spring semester abroad are not easy to quantify. One variable to think about is the start and end date of fall vs. spring semesters in Germany. Fall semester begins in very early September and runs through the end of January or beginning of February; spring semester begins in very early March and runs through mid-July. A second variable relates to the issue of credits and the relationship of the program to the St. Olaf Interim. A fall semester program makes it impossible to take a St. Olaf Interim course. However, fall semester students may bring back up to 5.0 credits from a Fall with Interim semester program. Spring semester programs begin in very early March, thereby allowing students to take a St. Olaf Interim course; however, the number of credits they may bring back from a spring semester program is 4.5 credits. A final variable relates to summer: spring semester programs do not end until mid-July, making it difficult to find summer employment or an internship in the U.S. See #5 below for information about costs.

2. I am not a German major or German Studies concentrator. Can I still study abroad in Germany?

Study abroad in Germany is definitely not limited to German majors and German Studies concentrators. With regard to language level, any St. Olaf student who has successfully completed German 232 or higher with a grade of B- or better in the last German course they take before departure is eligible to study abroad in Germany. Our programs in Flensburg and Konstanz provide courses for students with a range of abilities in German, from grammar-focused courses for learners of German as a second language to regular university

courses in German for those with advanced proficiency. Because the German university system is seeking to internationalize, many courses are offered in English.

3. Of the programs in Germany, how do I determine the program that will be best for me? What questions should I ask myself? What are the principal differences between Flensburg and Konstanz?

The primary differences between Flensburg and Konstanz relate to geographical location, to the history of the university, and to the university's size. Both cities have a population of about 80,000. In terms of location, Flensburg is located on the border between Germany and Denmark. The university was originally founded as an institution intended to prepare future teachers. It has since evolved into a full-fledged university, enrolling about 2,500 students; however most of the degree programs include a teaching licensure track and field-specific pedagogy courses. This aspect may be of particular interest to students pursuing an education concentration or teaching licensure. Konstanz on the other hand, is located on the opposite end of the country on the border with Switzerland. The university has a student enrollment of 15,000, including a substantial international graduate research presence as part of its status as part of Germany's Excellence Initiative.

Konstanz offer an intensive language program, Flensburg does not. Both programs offer a wide range of courses. Housing arrangements are the same in both programs. Both programs offer international students guidance support and co-curricular opportunities through their international offices. [See #5 below for a cost comparison.]

4. Which disciplines or subject matter areas can students study in Flensburg and in Konstanz? Is it possible to study both humanities and, for example, natural sciences?

Both universities offer a full range of academic disciplines. Flensburg offers in addition a substantial array of pedagogy courses. Enrollment in university courses, particularly those taught in German, is often at the discretion of the instructor or professor. St. Olaf students with sufficient German knowledge typically have little difficulty enrolling in humanities and social science courses taught in German. The same can be said of courses in these fields taught in English. Students interested in courses in the natural sciences must also ask instructor permission to enroll, but, more importantly, must consider that St. Olaf's natural sciences departments often do not accept courses from abroad toward their majors. If you are a science major, you should consult your Major Advisor regarding the department's policy with respect to courses taken abroad. In some instances, natural sciences majors elect to audit such courses in order to learn the German terminology and scientific philosophy, but do not ultimately transfer credit for those courses.

5. With respect to program costs, is there a difference between Flensburg and Konstanz? Is there a difference between fall semester and spring semester? Are there scholarships or financial aid available?

There is a cost difference depending on the program. During the 2018-2019 Academic Year, Flensburg was the less expensive of the two programs. For the Fall and Spring semesters, Flensburg was approximately \$2800.00 more than the typical cost of a semester on campus, where Konstanz was approximately \$4250.00 above the cost of a typical semester on campus.

Budget Sheets can be found here: [Flensburg](#) [Konstanz](#)

Students accepted to a program will automatically be considered for an additional scholarship from St. Olaf. The Financial Aid Office will review a student's financial need and the cost of the program. Approximately 2/3 of students off-campus will receive an additional scholarship from the College. Additional scholarship or loan options may be available depending on the program or student. We highly recommend you review the [IOS](#)

[website](#) for scholarship options and/or talk with Annie Lee in the Financial Aid Office. You can also meet with Antonia Grant in the IOS Office to discuss scholarship options and/or how to search for scholarships.

6. Is there anything specific I need to know about having courses I might take in Germany transfer back to St. Olaf?

In order to count toward the German major, courses must be taken in German; courses taught in English will not count toward the major even if their subject matter is German- or Germany-related. In terms of the German Studies concentration, courses taken in Germany may be taken either in German or English (although we encourage concentrators to take courses taught in German). If you have a major other than or in addition to German, it is crucial that you talk with that Major Adviser before you choose a program and depart for Germany about which courses might count toward the major. St. Olaf students often use their German university courses for GE credits. See the program descriptions on studio-abroad for a list of pre-approved GE courses. The assignment of GE credit for a course not on the pre-approved list must be approved by the Germany study abroad adviser before the semester begins. This often requires submitting a course description or syllabus for review.

Credits transferred to St. Olaf appear on your transcript, but the grades you receive will not be calculated into your GPA. However, after graduation, some graduate and professional schools may wish to calculate your GPA with those grades added in.

7. How does the Hamburg Interim fit into the department's program of study abroad opportunities?

The Hamburg Interim (German 253) was designed to meet the needs of several groups of students. For students completing German 232, whether they intend to continue in German or not, it offers a capstone immersion experience in one of Germany's most important cities. For German majors and German Studies concentrators who are unable to spend a year or a semester abroad, it offers an alternative immersion opportunity, which we believe is an essential element of the major/concentration. For students who do study abroad for a semester or year, it can serve as an entry point to begin the in-country immersion or as an additional experience abroad in a different German city. The course is designed at the 250-level so that all students who have completed the FOL can take advantage of it.