

Global Master's in International Education

Pre-Departure Information 2024-2025

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Local Culture, Customs, Food & Transport

There are numerous guidebooks and online resources for Spain and Vietnam that students are strongly encouraged to research and read prior to departure. To learn about local customs and culture, check out the *Culture smart: The essential guide to customs and cultures* series, though check the publication date to ensure the most up to date edition. For a list of other guidebooks, [click here](#).

Pre-Departure Meetings

Approximately one month prior to departure, students will be invited to two virtual meetings with admissions, academic director(s), student affairs, and country coordination teams to go over program expectations and highlights, arrival day and orientation, health, safety and well-being (including COVID protocols as appropriate), and to answer all student questions. Students are strongly encouraged to attend both sessions; the meetings will be recorded for those who are unable to do so.

Arrival Day

Students should arrive in Washington, DC, on Sunday, September 8, in time for an optional informal dinner gathering at 6 pm. Details about dinner and our subsequent schedule will be provided closer to the start of the program. Students are responsible for finding their own housing in the area.

Please note that while students can arrive in Washington earlier than the start date, SIT cannot provide any support prior to the official program start date. Students may travel together with their degree chair from Washington, DC, to Spain on Saturday, September 14. In both Spain and Vietnam, students will be met by an SIT Graduate Institute staff member at the meeting time specified in the flight information document. Students should not plan to arrive in Spain any earlier than noted due to visa regulations. It is strongly recommended that students arrive to Vietnam on the designated day. If students arrive to Vietnam prior to the program start dates, they will be responsible for all pre-program expenses including transportation from the airport and hotel costs, and again, SIT cannot provide any support prior to the official program start date.

Orientation

Orientation in Washington, DC, will include getting-to-know-you activities and information about SIT and the International Education program's degree requirements. The Washington program also will include some class sessions and site visits to International Education-related organizations. The first several days in Spain and Vietnam are orientation periods for students to get accustomed to life in each respective country prior to the start of classes. Orientation in each location may include survival language training and cultural orientation. The group will stay in a modest hotel during each in-

country orientation before moving into permanent housing. Room and board during orientation are covered by the program; all students are required to remain in the program provided-hotel for the duration of orientation.

Academics

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by [David Kolb](#) and informed by scholars such as [John Dewey](#), [Paolo Freire](#), and [Kurt Lewin](#).

Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that expands beyond formal curricula and that involves both content (what you learn) and process (how you learn).

What does this mean for you as a Global Masters student? By the conclusion of your program, you can expect to have achieved the following Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge

Graduates will be able to:

1. Understand and articulate how the historical context and social, political, economic, and cultural forces shape education around the world;
2. Articulate their critical understanding of education systems around the world with emphases on social justice, equity, inclusion, and diversity;
3. Demonstrate their knowledge of influential theories in the international education field;
4. Understand the perspectives, relationships, roles, and influences of the stakeholders in the International Education field;
5. Articulate how power, privilege, and oppression mediate educational practices around the world; and
6. Articulate how international education policy is developed and implemented at the institutional, local, state, regional, national, and international levels.

Skills

Graduates will be able to:

1. Apply fundamental research skills including conceptualizing, designing, conducting, and presenting original research in the IE field;
2. Design, deliver, and evaluate international education programs (including proposal preparation, needs assessment, curriculum design, budgeting, human resource management, health and safety, crisis management, marketing, recruitment, and evaluation); and
3. Create and implement IE-related content through writing, facilitation, and public speaking.

Attitudes

Graduates will commit to:

1. Promote equity, inclusion, diversity, and social justice in education;
2. Uphold high ethical standards and critical reflexivity in all aspects of one's professional work; and
3. Value reciprocity in knowledge- and skills-sharing.

To achieve these Outcomes, you will participate in a wide variety of learning experiences (e.g., readings, lectures, discussions with professors in class and with local experts, research, visits to local sites of practice) and opportunities for reflection (e.g., in-class discussions, preparing projects and presentations, writing papers). Your learning also will benefit from the vast diversity of cultural backgrounds, training, and teaching styles of your faculty.

Please note that as an accredited institution, all SIT courses are required to meet minimum regulations regarding the earning of graduate credit. Thus, students will spend approximately 15 hours in class and related activities plus 30 hours in individual and/or group work, for a total of 45 hours, for each credit earned.

WHERE CLASSES ARE HELD

In Washington, DC, our class sessions will take place in various locations around the metropolitan area. In Spain, classes are held on the campus of a local partner institution or at the SIT Center, while in Vietnam, students attend classes at the SIT Center, which is based amongst the offices of our local partner, the Southern Institute of Social Science (SISS). In both locations, students have access to libraries, Wi-Fi, and other resources. Other facilities such as coffee shops, gyms, or yoga classes are located nearby as well.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

A typical week in each location will include approximately four or five class sessions ranging from two to three hours each, as well as a site visit to a local education institution and time for completing course readings, working on projects or papers, and personal reflection. Students should anticipate spending about 40 hours each week on academics.

LOCAL LANGUAGE LEARNING

Professionals in the field of International Education are often required to have some degree of foreign language proficiency. In addition, language is a key tool for being able to immerse oneself in local culture. For these reasons, MA in International Education students are required to meet SIT's Language and Culture Proficiency Requirement via one of two options:

- The Language Proficiency Pathway is beneficial for students for whom proficiency in the target language aligns with their career goals and professional interests. This pathway is recommended for students who enter their program of study with mid-level to advanced knowledge of their target language. It requires documentation of language proficiency at a satisfactory (i.e., Intermediate Advanced on the ACTFL scale) level. Students may focus on any language of their choice.
- The Language Learning Pathway is beneficial for students whose career goals and professional interests are well served by improving their ability to interact in cross-cultural settings without attaining a specific level of proficiency in the target language. This pathway is recommended for self-motivated students who enter

their program of study with no or basic knowledge of their target language. Students choosing this pathway should be comfortable learning independently. It requires documentation of language study and cultural engagement.

More details can be found in SIT's Graduate Catalog. Students will be able to consult with their advisor during their first term in the program about which option is most appropriate for them.

While the program does not offer graduate-level language courses, students may take placement exams during orientation and if at the introductory or intermediate level, may take language courses in either or both locations. Language classes are approximately four hours per week for 9 to 10 weeks. Students earn two undergraduate credits per course; these credits do not count toward the degree requirements but do count toward the Language Learning Pathway requirements.

PRACTICUM

Beginning in the first semester in Spain, students will meet with the program chair and their adviser about their individual learning goals. This process takes place as part of the Reflective Practice course, and includes the preparation of a Learning Plan, completion of several workshops led by our Office of Career Services, and reflective writing. Students begin their actual search for a practicum in their second term. SIT will support students in finding an approved practicum with an educational institution, school, non-profit, think tank, government agency, exchange program, language school, refugee resettlement program, or other organization involved in international education work in Spain, Vietnam, the United States, or another country of their choice in which they are permitted to intern.

During the two semesters of the practicum, students will meet regularly and remotely with their academic advisor and cohort as part of their Reflective Practice courses to discuss practicum experiences across institutional, cultural, geographical, and political settings, as well as their individual learning and capstone work. Students are registered as part-time students during these two semesters and are responsible for meeting all academic requirements.

CAPSTONE

Upon completion of their coursework and during their practicum, students demonstrate, assess, and synthesize their learning through the preparation of a capstone project and participation in a one-week capstone seminar held multiple times each year. Researching and writing the capstone paper takes you deeply into the experiential learning cycle, where you'll explore the meaning of your reflective practice experience, integrate theory and practice in a written and oral presentation, and make a contribution to the field of international education.

SIT EMAIL - LIBRARY - CANVAS ACCESS

Approximately 30 days before the start of the program, all students will receive an encrypted message from SIT's Information Technology department with their SIT email address and login

credentials. Once students log into their account the first time, they will find an email from the SIT library with information about how to log into the library and Canvas, our learning management system.

Communication & Money

Students may want to be in regular communication with friends and family from home during their time abroad, but please bear in mind that different time zones, unreliable phone lines, and changing program activities can complicate communication.

It is important students are clear with family and friends about their availability during the Global Master's program. SIT Graduate Institute recommends moderating time on social media to engage locally, as constant communication with friends and family at home can impact students' abilities to acculturate.

PHONES

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. For that purpose, students are required to either (a) bring an open, unlocked smart phone from home to the program that can accept a local SIM card, and is compatible with and usable at the program location, (b) work with the program director within the first week upon arrival in country to purchase a smart phone locally, or (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone. DO NOT purchase an international plan. It is critical that you have a local SIM with a local telephone number to connect.

MONEY

It's best to bring a debit card to withdraw money in local currency rather than bringing cash. All students must contact their bank to let them know of their travel plans and dates so that the debit card is unlocked in all locations. U.S. banks can also provide a list of ATM machines in each country that is compatible with students' debit cards. It is also advisable to alert students' credit card companies that they will be traveling for twelve months. SIT does not recommend students open local bank accounts.

MONEY TRANSFER

[Wise.com](https://wise.com) is an international money transfer service that is safe, and charges low rates should students need to transfer money to local bank accounts.

ADDRESS IN COUNTRY

Receiving a package at the program sites can be expensive and problematic. Customs agents must inspect all packages and students, as the recipients, are responsible for any fees. In addition, there are cases of items being lost in the mail or taking so long to reach the recipient that the recipient has completed their program by the time the items are received. For these reasons, sending packages should be done only for emergency situations. Additionally, sending valuables is highly discouraged. SIT does not forward student mail and cannot be responsible for lost mail.

Despite cheaper prices, reliance on the U.S. Postal Service is not advised due to delays and unreliability. If it is an emergency and necessary for someone to send you mail, then program staff can assist you with the most appropriate address to give the sender. Posted letters and packages should be sent via DHL as this is the service that we have had the most success with for international mail. When given the option, it's always a good idea to send packages certified and with a tracking number that allows the sender to track the package.

Free Time

SIT Graduate Institute encourages students to schedule visits from friends and family in each location around the requirements of the program, keeping in mind that it is not legally permissible to remain within the Schengen Zone beyond the conclusion of the formal program. Students are expected to engage in all program activities and coursework during the academic semester. Students will not be excused from program components to attend to visitors. Please note that visitors are responsible for their own accommodations and travel expenses.

Travel

Independent travel is permitted on the weekends and assigned breaks. During orientation in each country, the SIT staff will provide guidelines for independent travel.

Family & Partners

SIT Graduate Institute recognizes that, on occasion, students may wish to have a “companion” (defined as an immediate family member, or partner, to include dependent children) accompany them on their semester abroad. It is important to recognize that the academic and acculturation components require extensive time and energy. Students are expected to engage in every program activity including site visits, excursions, courses, and guest lectures. There are long days with sometimes unpredictable itinerary shifts due to local realities and rigorous academic assignments. SIT requests that students intending to host a companion provide SIT with at least 90 days’ notice of the request. All such requests require approval from SIT. Please contact [Student Health, Safety & Well-Being](#) office for more information.