Brilliance in Action

The Berkeley International Study Program (BISP) provides the opportunity for short-term study abroad at the world-class and culturally-rich University of California, Berkeley. Affectionately called “Berkeley” or “Cal,” it is famous for its top scholars, social activism, innovation, and diverse student body. In other words, “Brilliance in Action.”

Berkeley’s professors are some of the best in their fields, engaged in groundbreaking research, innovative thinking, inspiring teaching, and service to society. No less than seven of the university’s current faculty hold the Nobel Prize, demonstrating the level of expertise offered at this premier university. In our globalized world, UC Berkeley famously continues to promote free speech and thoughtful debate as the world of work and social networking becomes increasingly diversified.

The campus is vibrant and alive with some of the best undergraduate and graduate students from California and all over the world, who actively engage in campus life and in the community. The campus and surrounding areas are rich in culture, with unlimited opportunities to experience life in California and the U.S.

As a result of the university’s continued research and academic excellence, UC Berkeley is at the top of multiple world rankings. Every year it has been named one of the world’s “Elite Six” global university brands, according to the Times Higher Education. Additionally, UC Berkeley has been named the number one public university in the 2020 US News and World Report global rankings of universities, as it has been for the past five years.

UC Berkeley is located in the city of Berkeley, California, and is a mid-sized city known for its progressive policies and viewpoints, and is a hub of creativity and counterculture. It is just 20 minutes from iconic San Francisco. UC Berkeley is in close proximity to many famous sites, such as the Pacific Coast, the Golden Gate Bridge, Silicon Valley, Yosemite National Park, and the Sonoma and Napa Wine Country.

See what the BISP students are sharing on social media!

@bispcal #bispcal #bispgobears

Berkeley International Study Program

BISP Cal

Experience Brilliance

Berkeley International Study Program

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Berkeley International Study Program

BISP Cal
The Berkeley Experience

“I love how Berkeley brings together great minds from across the globe. Clicking with sisters and brothers from around the world on our paths to knowledge and ambition is the most fascinating gift throughout this enriching journey. Berkeley stands out for me given its academic prominence in political science, vibrant history of civil rights movements, and all the diverse cultures.”

Joery Chang, Political Science student, National Taiwan University, Taiwan

“If you value equality, diversity, curiosity and inclusiveness in addition to hard-working, dedicated and passionate professors... UC Berkeley would be an excellent option!”

Caroline Hopp, Innovation and Entrepreneurship student, University of Agder, Norway

“So much to see, so much to do!”

The Berkeley campus is buzzing with life, with more than 42,000 students from California and around the world to create a dynamic and interconnected community. Daily activities, performances and events are common on campus and the surrounding area, and is open to both the student population and the general public.

BISP students are encouraged to participate in student groups, of which there are over 1,000 available to choose from all over campus.

Students often travel to fun and exciting places within California. Common trips include nearby San Francisco, Napa Valley, Lake Tahoe, Yosemite and down the coastal beach areas to Los Angeles, Hollywood and San Diego. During school breaks they may go outside of California to Las Vegas, the Grand Canyon, up the Pacific Northwest to Oregon or Washington, New York, Chicago, Florida, Texas, or a particular favorite, Hawaii.

Berkeley is a rare spot in the world that brings together people of great diversity. Cherish the opportunity you get. There is so much to learn and experience through this interpersonal exchange. Take advantage of the various student activities available at Berkeley, step out of your comfort zone and try out new things!”

Ja Young, German Language student, Korea University, Korea

The Berkeley International Study Program (BISP) provides a unique opportunity for visiting international students to take high-quality courses alongside UC Berkeley degree students in a short-term study abroad program for one or two semesters. BISP provides sponsorship and the necessary letter of invitation to obtain a student visa for qualified students, who enroll in courses on a fee-paying basis. We also offer a robust program of activities and support to students who get the much sought-after “Berkeley Experience.”

Each semester, BISP sponsors over 400 visiting international students from all over the world, who enjoy the experience of taking classes at the world-famous UC Berkeley. They tend to do quite well here and have a fantastic experience both in and outside the classroom. BISP students often transfer these courses back to their home universities for their degree requirements.

BISP students come from a wide variety of academic backgrounds. BISP has its roots in an academic department and continues to maintain a very close relationship with other departments to provide a rich schedule of courses for all students, particularly those in the social sciences, arts, humanities, biological and physical sciences. We have many students from other fields such as business, media, health education, and politics who find relevant courses in these study areas. It is common in the U.S. for students to take courses in subjects outside of their major. UC Berkeley faculty and students greatly appreciate the participation of students from many cultures in the classrooms, making it an exciting and vibrant multicultural learning environment.

BISP provides a well-rounded, enriching experience with dedicated staff to support them. Students also participate in activities planned by our Cultural Peer Mentors, UC Berkeley students who assist with adjustment to the Berkeley campus and surrounding area, and provide opportunities to get to know other students and the culture of Berkeley and the U.S.

BISP Makes it Possible

“The Berkeley International Study Program (BISP) provides a unique opportunity for visiting international students to take high-quality courses alongside UC Berkeley degree students in a short-term study abroad program for one or two semesters. BISP provides sponsorship and the necessary letter of invitation to obtain a student visa for qualified students, who enroll in courses on a fee-paying basis. We also offer a robust program of activities and support to students who get the much sought-after ‘Berkeley Experience.’

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BISP has agreements with over 60 universities, in over a dozen countries. Most students who participate in BISP are nominated by these partner institutions once they are screened for qualifications which may include academic achievement, proficiency in English, and appropriate study fit. Those from a non-English speaking university must demonstrate this with a TOEFL (90 or higher) or IELTS (7.0 or higher) test score. Please go to http://bisp.berkeley.edu/programs/ and click on the link for BISP Partner Universities to see a complete list of our partners.”

Students who attend a partner university should inquire at their university’s International Office for procedures and deadlines to apply locally for a nomination to attend BISP. We recommend doing this as soon as possible as their deadlines will be earlier than the dates listed below.

Students who do not attend one of our partner universities may apply directly to BISP as an independent student, also called “freemover.” Information about this process can be found on the link above. BISP will accept a limited number of students who qualify, if there is space in their chosen area of study.

The general period of time in which BISP accepts independent inquiries for each semester is listed here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester Dates</th>
<th>Application Period</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Semester:</td>
<td>Mid-August to Mid-December</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Semester:</td>
<td>Mid-January to Mid-May</td>
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*Universities and scholarship organizations who are interested in a BISP partnership may inquire about this possibility by sending an email to bisp@berkeley.edu

Estimated costs per semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Cost (minimum of 12 units required)</td>
<td>$750 per unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC Berkeley Extension International Student Fee</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent Enrollment Term Application Fee</td>
<td>$125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cal Services Fee</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Living Costs (housing + food)</td>
<td>~ $10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Insurance (unless waived)</td>
<td>~ $925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (depending on number of units taken)</td>
<td>~ $20,800-$23,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Want to spend the summer in Berkeley?

Students coming in the fall semester may wish to take a couple of courses during the late summer session, starting in early July, in order to adjust to life in Berkeley earlier.

Students entering in the spring semester may choose to extend their time by taking summer classes in late-May and June. If you’re interested, contact us!