

Study Abroad Program



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About Us



Quality Leadership University has over 20 years of experience in study abroad programs, collaborating with several prestigious universities including the University of Louisville, Illinois State University, the University of Chile, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, among others. Through this exchange program, we aspire to offer students an unforgettable experience, affording them the opportunity to immerse themselves in a new culture and acquire new languages. Additionally, participants are empowered to expand their social networks, nurture self-confidence, and cultivate the resilience needed to become self-reliant adults

Why study abroad in Panama?

Panama, located in Central America, shares borders with Costa Rica and Colombia. Its capital, Panama City, is home to almost half of its 4 million people. The Panama Canal contributes significantly to the country's GDP, alongside growing sectors like commerce, banking, and tourism. Panama has the region's second-largest economy, experiencing rapid growth and boasting the highest per capita consumption in Central America. It ranks well in the Human Development Index and is the second most competitive economy in Latin America since 2010, according to the World Economic Forum. Panama's jungles cover 40% of its land and host unique tropical plants and animals.



Study Abroad Programs



Faculty Lead Programs

Semester Abroad

International Internships

City as a Classroom

Service Learning

Faculty-led Programs

A Seamless Academic and Cultural Experience

Quality Leadership University (QLU) offers a customized faculty-led study abroad experience, allowing partner institutions to design and deliver their courses while benefiting from QLU's **local expertise, academic facilities, and logistical support**. Faculty members can develop programs integrating local case studies, industry visits, and cultural immersion, ensuring students gain academic and real-world insights. Since the partner institution retains complete academic control and issues the transcripts, universities can seamlessly integrate the program into their curriculum while ensuring **credit transferability**. QLU provides modern classrooms, bilingual staff, and continuous on-site assistance, ensuring a smooth experience for faculty and students.



Beyond academics, QLU enriches faculty-led programs with customized cultural and professional experiences, offering students a deeper understanding of Panama's business environment, history, and biodiversity. Programs can include excursions to the Panama Canal, visits to Indigenous communities, service-learning projects with NGOs, and industry tours aligned with the academic focus. QLU handles logistics such as accommodation, transportation, and guided activities, allowing faculty to focus on teaching while ensuring students have a structured and enriching experience. With competitive pricing designed to promote internationalization, QLU is an ideal partner for institutions seeking to expand their global learning opportunities while maintaining complete academic oversight.



Semester Abroad

Earn U.S. College Credits at QLU



Through its partnership with the University of Louisville (UofL), Quality Leadership University (QLU) offers students the opportunity to spend a semester abroad in Panama City while taking official UofL courses. This program allows students to stay on track with their degree requirements while experiencing an international learning environment. All courses are taught in English by University of Louisville-approved faculty, ensuring the same academic rigor and standards as on the main campus. Since students remain enrolled at UofL, they earn official UofL credits, making the credit transfer process seamless.

Beyond the classroom, students benefit from a rich cultural and professional immersion experience in one of Latin America's most dynamic cities. The program includes excursions to the Panama Canal, guided visits to historical landmarks like Casco Viejo, and opportunities to engage with local and multinational businesses. Additionally, QLU provides full student support services, including housing assistance, orientation programs, and academic advising, ensuring a smooth transition and a rewarding international experience. With affordable tuition and living costs, this semester abroad offers a high-quality education, cultural exposure, and professional networking opportunities in a global business hub.

Courses Available



International Internships

Gain Global Experience with QLU

Quality Leadership University (QLU) offers international internship opportunities in Panama City, providing students with hands-on experience in a dynamic, multicultural business environment. Through its extensive network of corporate partners, NGOs, and multinational organizations, QLU connects students with internships that align with their academic and career goals. These internships offer students the chance to apply classroom knowledge in real-world settings, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and gain valuable global business insights. The program is structured to ensure students receive meaningful, project-based work experience, enhancing their resumes and professional networks.



QLU provides comprehensive support throughout the internship, including placement assistance, professional mentorship, housing options, and cultural orientation. Students can also participate in networking events, industry visits, and leadership workshops to maximize their professional development. Living and working in Panama allows students to experience one of Latin America's leading financial and business hubs, engage with diverse professionals, and expand their global career prospects. With affordable program fees and strong industry connections, QLU's international internship program is an excellent opportunity for students seeking to enhance their professional skills while immersing themselves in a new cultural and economic landscape.



City as a Classroom



Panama City serves as a dynamic and immersive learning environment, transforming the urban landscape into a living classroom for students participating in study abroad programs. With its blend of modern infrastructure, historical landmarks, and diverse cultural influences, the city offers unique opportunities for experiential learning. From exploring the Panama Canal to engaging with local businesses and NGOs, students gain real-world insights into global trade, sustainability, and social development. The city's vibrant neighborhoods, museums, and markets further enrich the educational experience, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of Latin American culture, economics, and innovation. By stepping outside the traditional classroom, students in Panama City can apply academic concepts to real-life scenarios, fostering critical thinking and cross-cultural competence.

Service Learning

Gain Global Experience with QLU

Service learning in Panama provides students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in meaningful ways while engaging with local communities. By integrating hands-on volunteer work with structured learning objectives, students develop cultural awareness, leadership skills, and a deeper understanding of social issues. Whether supporting educational programs, environmental conservation, or community development initiatives, service-learning experiences allow students to make a tangible impact while gaining real-world experience. Panama's diverse socio-economic landscape presents numerous opportunities for students to contribute and learn in settings that align with their academic and personal interests.

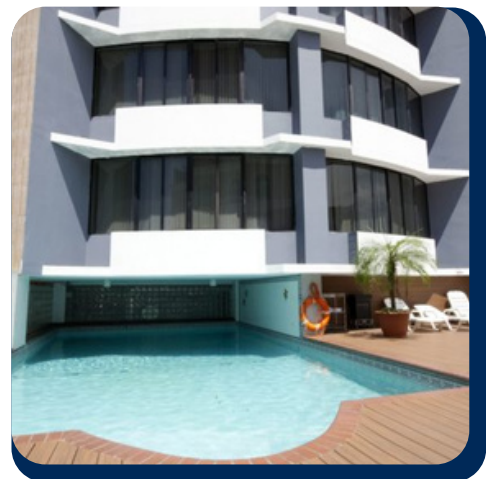


ALDEAS
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PANAMÁ



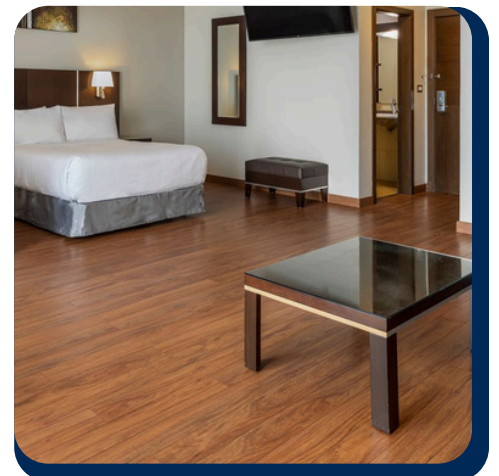
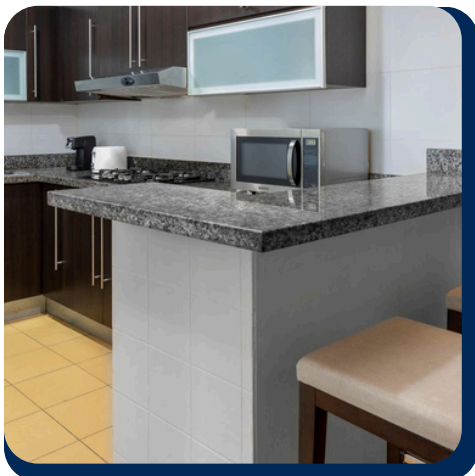
Acomodations

Located in the heart of Panama City, Hotel Torres de Alba is an excellent option for long-term stays and short visits alike. This aparthotel offers spacious, fully equipped suites with kitchens, laundry facilities, and comfortable living areas, making it ideal for students and professionals seeking a home-like experience. Guests can enjoy amenities such as a rooftop pool, a well-equipped gym, and a daily breakfast buffet, all while being within walking distance of restaurants, shopping centers, and key business districts. Its central location provides easy access to public transportation and major city attractions, ensuring a convenient and comfortable stay.



Acomodations

For those looking for a blend of luxury and extended-stay convenience, Marriott Executive Apartments Panama City, Finisterre offers upscale accommodations tailored to business travelers and long-term visitors. These elegantly designed apartments feature fully equipped kitchens, spacious work areas, and premium amenities, including an outdoor pool, fitness center, and on-site dining options. The hotel's prime location in the financial district provides easy access to key corporate offices, entertainment venues, and cultural attractions. Whether for a short stay or an extended visit, guests can enjoy the signature hospitality of Marriott with the comfort of a private residence.



Cultural Experiences

Embera Villaje

The adventure begins when one of our friendly and knowledgeable guides comes to pick you up at your Panama City hotel around 7:30 - 8:00AM and drive for about an hour to the boat ramp where the Emberá meet us with their dugout canoe.

Upon your arrival in the village, you'll be greeted with traditional music and a warm welcome from the villagers, inviting you to become part of their community. After approximately 10 minutes to explore the village independently, you'll be treated to a brief presentation on Emberá culture, traditions, and their remarkable craftsmanship.

Following lunch, you'll have free time to explore, shop for crafts, get a temporary tattoo, or chat with the Emberá people. To wrap up the experience, villagers will perform traditional shamanic and celebratory dances and music before we head back to Panama City by dugout canoe. This trip lasts a full day.



Isla Grande

Isla Grande is located on the Caribbean coast of Panama and offers a unique experience to its visitors. The adventure begins at 6:00 a.m. heading to Colón, with a first stop at the ruins of Portobelo. Students will have at least 20 minutes for a brief tour before we proceed to the pier to take a 7-minute boat ride to the island. We will be welcomed by the Cocotal Hotel, where we will spend the day at a private hotel with a saltwater pool, and lunch will be included. The students will have the opportunity to enjoy a full day in the Caribbean Sea and will be back in the city at around 6:00 p.m.



Cultural Experiences

Casco Viejo and Panamá Canal

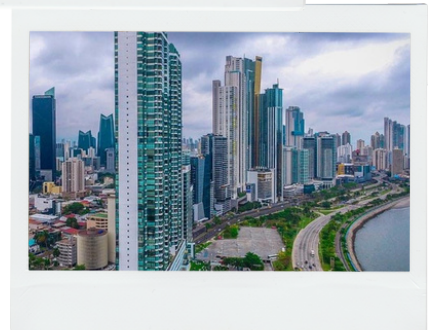
Casco Antiguo, also known as Casco Viejo, is the historic district of Panama City and is often considered one of the most charming and culturally rich areas in Panama.

This tour starts at 8:00 a.m. Students will be able to explore the Casco Viejo on a guided tour, providing them with the opportunity to learn more about the culture and history of this iconic place.



Panama City Biodiversity Museum and Causeway

This guided tour begins by exploring the most important and culturally rich places in Panama City, followed by a visit to the Biomuseo lasting approximately 1 hour, where students can learn about the diversity in Panama and its impact on Earth. This museum was designed by the renowned architect Frank Gehry. The tour concludes with a ride along the causeway and an afternoon of biking.



Cultural Experiences

Gamboa Rainforest

Gamboa Rainforest Resort is an exceptional destination just 30 minutes from Panama City, located in the heart of the mystical Soberania National Park, at the point where the Chagres River and the Panama Canal meet. It is here where modern comforts blend with warm and captivating adventures to provide the best opportunity to experience the wild beauty of the Panamanian rainforest. Students will have the opportunity to take an aerial tram tour to reach the observation tower, then proceed to the butterfly and sloth exhibits, and finally, they will take a boat ride to Monkey Island.



Train ride to Colon and San Lorenzo Fort

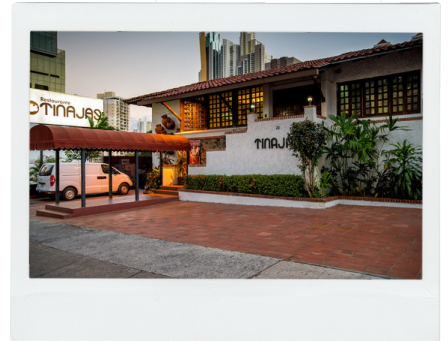
The train journey from Panama to the city of Colon takes approximately 2 hours, during which you can observe beautiful nature along the way. Upon arriving in Colon, the students will take a bus for 20 minutes to reach the Fort of San Lorenzo. This fort was built by the Spaniards in the 17th century to defend the mouth of the Chagres River and protect themselves from pirates and corsairs who roamed the area at that time. It has a rich colonial history and has witnessed numerous conflicts over the years.



Cultural Experiences

El Trapiche

El trapiche restaurant, located in the city center, is famous for offering diners a traditional Panamanian culinary experience. The restaurant is characterized by its cozy and authentic atmosphere, with decor that reflects Panamanian culture, along with a folkloric show for the enjoyment of all its customers. This restaurant offers a wide variety of typical Panamanian dishes such as sancocho (a hearty soup), chicken with rice, patacones (fried green plantains), ceviche, carimañolas (meat-filled empanadas), among others.

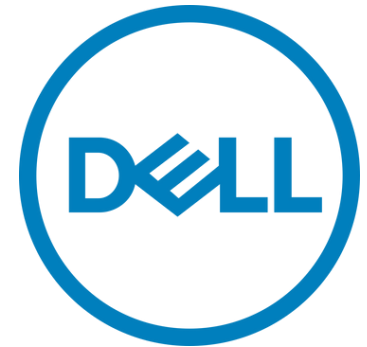


Taboga Island

Taboga Island offers a peaceful escape from Panama City while enjoying the Pacific beaches. Its short ferry ride from Panama City takes approximately 30 minutes, making it an accessible day trip. Students will have restaurants at their disposal and can rent chairs and umbrellas for their beach day.



Company Visits*



Testimonials



"The structure of the program was very effective for first time study abroad participants because it provided the leadership and connections to make me feel safe while being abroad for the first time."



Sean Deskins
University of Louisville



Amala Ankem
University of Louisville

"Studying abroad was one of the most exciting and academically challenging endeavors I have ever undertaken. The cultural immersion I experienced is something you just can't understand until you settle into another country, and the specified courses on culture at Quality Leadership University really elevated my interests and abilities as a student."

Thinking back on her experience in Panama, I smile. I had the time of my life making new friends, learning Spanish, visits, and dance lessons. I learned a lot about community, friendship, and having a good time.



Lauren Lee
University of Louisville



Daliyah Peppers
Illinois State University

"Coming from ISU, the shift from a college town to city life in Panama was eye-opening. QLU is small but efficient, and living costs are lower overall. Using the U.S. dollar makes things simple, and everything you need is nearby. If you choose Panama, you'll love the experience and the adventure."

"One of the most transformative learning experiences I've had has come from engaging with diverse cultures and communities. Studying and traveling abroad has not only broadened my worldview, but also allowed me to form meaningful friendships across borders—enriching both my education and my life in ways I never imagined."



Nadine Jacobsen-McLean,
University of Louisville



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