Central Michigan University – Study Abroad Strategic Plan 2025–2027

About Our Department

The Office of Global Engagement – Study Abroad at Central Michigan University (CMU) empowers students to engage with the world through academic, cultural, and professional experiences that transform lives. Study Abroad programs enable CMU students to gain intercultural competence and a deeper understanding of our world.

Through semester, summer, and short-term programs across diverse regions, CMU students are challenged to step beyond the classroom to become adaptable and culturally intelligent leaders. Our department supports the university's mission of preparing students for a global society by connecting learning with action and curiosity with purpose.

We believe that studying abroad is not simply travel, it is education in motion. It develops empathy, enhances employability, and strengthens CMU's role as a globally engaged institution.

Introduction to the Strategic Plan

This two-year strategic plan (2025–2027) serves as a roadmap for the continued growth and enhancement of CMU's Study Abroad programs. Built in alignment with **Central Michigan University's Strategic Plan (2023–2028)**, this plan positions Study Abroad as a key driver of student success, global engagement, and institutional sustainability.

Our office seeks to expand access, increase participation, and strengthen academic alignment with CMU's mission. The following initiatives support the University's four strategic priorities:

University Priority 1: Student Scholarly Success

Prepare bold leaders and learners who innovate and adapt in a rapidly changing world by:

- Engaging students to lead in a rapidly changing world.
- Expanding interdisciplinary opportunities to meet critical societal challenges in local, state, and global contexts.
- Intentionally internationalizing the student experience and CMU campus.

University Priority 2: Engage Communities

Cultivate and enrich reciprocal partnerships with university stakeholders to ensure a lasting impact in the communities we serve by:

- Engaging with domestic and international communities.

University Priority 3: Enhance Organizational Culture

Raise CMU's national profile as a vibrant and nurturing community where all members feel valued, empowered to thrive, and experience a strong sense of belonging by:

- Celebrating the stories and achievements of students, alumni, and stakeholders to foster connection, inspire engagement, and strengthen our sense of community.
- Actively gathering and responding to student feedback through surveys and other channels to continuously enhance the student experience, promote inclusivity, and advance national recognition.

University Priority 4: Ensure Institutional Sustainability

Embrace sustainable operations that ensure wise stewardship of resources by:

- Enhancing our technological support to ease faculty proposals, student applications, and safety and security engagement.
- Improving our safety and security policies to enhance reaction time and training for faculty to support our students and community.

Our Two Year Plan Strategic Pillars

Pillar	Description
Mission-Aligned Programs	Mission-Aligned Programs serve as the heart of CMU's global education vision by offering study abroad experiences that are intentionally designed to reflect the university's core values and academic mission. These programs promote global citizenship, intercultural empathy, inclusive excellence, and experiential learning. Through initiatives that center equity, sustainability, and critical global issues, CMU Study Abroad aims to provide transformative opportunities that extend the classroom across borders while supporting the diverse goals and identities of our students and faculty. Mission alignment ensures that every international experience reinforces CMU's broader commitment to social impact, public service, and student success.
Revenue-Generating & External Partnerships	To ensure long-term sustainability and innovation, Revenue-Generating and External Partnership Programs focus on developing financially viable models of global engagement that simultaneously strengthen CMU's institutional profile. These initiatives generate income through program fees, alumni travel, professional development courses, and inbound exchanges, while deepening collaboration with international universities, government agencies, and donors. By strategically growing partnerships and expanding our audience to include alumni, professionals, and international scholars, these programs enhance CMU's brand, extend our global reach, and create new funding pathways for student scholarships and program development.
Operational Excellence & Student Experience	Operational Excellence & Student Experience focuses on the systems, infrastructure, and support that make study abroad safe, accessible, and high-impact. This pillar prioritizes streamlined processes, student-centered design, and continual improvement in areas such as pre-departure preparation, risk management,

Pillar	Description
	faculty training, feedback mechanisms, and advising. A commitment to operational excellence ensures that every participant—regardless of background—feels supported, informed, and confident throughout their global journey. The student experience is at the center of every policy, technology upgrade, and communication touchpoint, driving trust, retention, and educational quality.
Office Development, Capacity Building & Strategic Positioning	This pillar focuses on strengthening the internal foundation and external visibility of the Office of Global Engagement (OGE) as a strategic unit within CMU. By investing in staffing, professional development, marketing, infrastructure, and data systems, the office can expand its reach, effectiveness, and impact. Strategic positioning also involves raising the profile of global learning on campus and externally, ensuring that study abroad is recognized as a central component of CMU's academic mission and student success strategy. Through cross-campus collaboration, branding, resource development, and policy influence, this pillar ensures long-term viability, leadership, and innovation in global education at CMU.

Pillar Strategies and Initiatives

Mission-Aligned Programs

Initiative	Description
Underserved Students Abroad Initiative	Provide targeted funding, identity-based advising, mentorship, and customized support for historically underserved student populations. Focus groups include first-generation students, BIPOC students, low-income students, veterans, and others. Partner with TRIO,

Initiative	Description
	McNair Scholars, and Identity Centers to ensure broad access and representation.
Faculty-Led Program Development Grants	Provide funding for faculty to design and lead new study abroad programs aligned with CMU's academic mission and global priorities. These grants encourage innovation and expand program offerings.
Internationalization Award for Faculty	Collaborate with the Provost's and/or President's Office to create an award recognizing faculty champions who advance CMU's internationalization goals and global engagement.
Recognition & Awards Program	Launch annual awards to celebrate excellence in global education. Recognize outstanding students, faculty, and staff through a campus-wide ceremony and publication.
Expand Direct Enroll and Exchange Programs	Expand partnerships with direct-enroll providers and exchange programs to develop high-demand, affordable opportunities. Increase direct enroll participation by 10% annually, while phasing out unsustainable partnerships and introducing new ones aligned with student interest and quality standards.

Revenue-Generating & External Partnerships

Initiative	Description
State Department Inbound Program Bids	Actively pursue U.S. Department of State-funded exchanges such as IVLP, and YSEALI. These programs bring emerging leaders to CMU, enhancing prestige and partnerships.
Alumni & Donor Travel (Faculty-Led)	Create short-term international travel opportunities for alumni and donors led by CMU faculty. These experiences generate revenue and build donor loyalty, with proceeds supporting scholarships and endowments.
Global Youth Academy	Explore developing a dual-location summer experience for high school students that combines a

Initiative	Description
	week on CMU's campus with an international travel component. This pipeline program fosters early global awareness and recruitment potential.

Operational Excellence & Student Experience

Initiative	Description
Annual Impact Report	Publish an annual report featuring data on participation, diversity, outcomes, and ROI to inform leadership and support advocacy.
360° Feedback System	Implement multi-phase student feedback collection before, during, and after programs for continuous improvement and data storytelling.
Crisis Simulation and Faculty Training	Conduct annual crisis management training and tabletop simulations to ensure preparedness and alignment with risk management best practices.
Safety Enhancements Digital Risk Dashboard	Evaluate Study Abroad travel insurance and risk management policies and recommend needed modifications. Integrate a live dashboard to monitor incidents, track student safety, and enhance communication during emergencies.

Office Development, Capacity Building & Strategic Positioning

Initiative	Description
Policy and Procedure Manual	Develop a comprehensive manual consolidating study abroad policies, procedures, and best practices to ensure transparency and compliance.
Strategic Alignment with Enrollment and Retention Goals	Collaborate with Enrollment Management and Academic Affairs to position study abroad as a recruitment and retention driver, using data to connect participation with academic success.

Initiative	Description
Global Engagement Software Management System	Evaluate current Study Abroad Software Systems for efficiency, student experience, improved faculty process.
Professional Development Fund for Staff	Provide funding and structured opportunities for OGE staff to attend national and international conferences, pursue certifications, and participate in leadership programs.

Outcomes (2025–2027)

By 2027, the CMU Office of Study Abroad will have:

Mission-Aligned Programs

- Increased overall student participation in study abroad by **10%**, with a specific focus on **underserved student populations**, including first-generation students, BIPOC students, low-income students, and veterans.
- Expanded **faculty-led programs** by **10%**, emphasizing alignment with CMU's academic mission and global priorities.
- Implemented a **university-recognized Internationalization Award** to acknowledge faculty contributions to global engagement.
- Launched a **Recognition & Awards Program** celebrating students, faculty, and staff excellence in global education.
- Increased participation in **direct-enroll and exchange programs** by 10% annually, while phasing out unsustainable or low-demand partnerships and introducing new high-quality agreements.

Revenue-Generating & External Partnerships

- Secured at least **two State Department-funded program bids** or equivalent high-profile inbound exchanges annually.
- Generated new revenue through **alumni and donor travel programs**, with proceeds supporting scholarships, endowments, and program development.

Operational Excellence & Student Experience

- Published **Annual Impact Reports** with participation metrics, diversity data, student outcomes, and ROI to support leadership, donors, and advocacy efforts.
- Implemented a **360° feedback system** to gather student input before, during, and after programs, driving continuous improvement and partner evaluation.
- Conducted **annual crisis simulation and faculty training** to ensure readiness and alignment with best practices in risk management.
- Established a **Digital Risk Dashboard** for real-time monitoring of global incidents and student safety alerts, while implementing improved insurance and policies.

Office Development, Capacity Building & Strategic Positioning

- Developed and maintained a comprehensive **Policy and Procedure Manual** to standardize operations, improve compliance, and support staff, faculty, and students.
- Strengthened **strategic alignment with enrollment and retention goals** by integrating study abroad into recruitment and academic pathways, demonstrating its impact on student success.
- Completed an evaluation of the **Global Engagement Software Management System**, to streamline operations, improve data integrity, and enhance the student experience.
- Team members having access to at least one conference and one learning opportunity a year.

Overall Impact

- Enhanced CMU's global visibility, reputation, and ability to attract diverse students and faculty to international experiences.
- Positioned study abroad as a **central driver of student success, institutional sustainability, and global engagement** across the university.

Closing Statement

FINAL

Central Michigan University's Study Abroad Strategic Plan (2025–2027) represents a commitment to growth, inclusion, and excellence in global learning. Guided by CMU's mission and the university's broader 2028 Strategic Plan, this two-year roadmap ensures that global education remains a defining component of the CMU experience.

As we look toward 2027, our focus will remain on empowering students and faculty to lead with empathy, curiosity, and courage in a connected world. Together, we will expand opportunity, deepen impact, and strengthen CMU's legacy as a university that inspires global citizens who lead with purpose — **Go Global and Fire Up Chips!**