UMASS AMHERST STUDY PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

The Graduate Program Director (GPD) and faculty from the department to which you are applying will be reading your Study Proposal. They will want to know why you want to take courses in their department, what qualifies you to enroll in their courses, and how this academic experience will benefit you. In general, your Study Proposal should be two pages, double-spaced, and the main emphasis should be on academics. Please provide detailed information on your academic background and achievements, and indicate your specific areas of interest/concentration.

Preparation for Writing Your Statement

- Choose one specific academic department to which you will direct your application, e.g., Economics, Chemistry, English, etc.
- Browse through the UMass Amherst course catalog (SPIRE) and identify specific graduate level courses from the department to which you are applying. Courses numbered 500 and above are considered graduate-level courses. Take note of course pre-requisites (have you fulfilled them?). Often, the same classes or similar ones will be offered each year, but sometimes during only one term, e.g., fall or spring. Since the course catalog for future semesters is not online yet, you will need to look at the current as well as previous semesters. However, be prepared for changes and look for alternatives that you would be willing to register. You can also check the Graduate Bulletin to see if the course lists have been updated. Keep in mind that you need to maintain full-time graduate student status (minimum 9 credits per semester) throughout your studies abroad.

Writing Your Statement

- Articulate your academic and career goals and objectives and explain how a semester/year abroad at UMass Amherst would help you achieve them.
- List specific courses (names and course numbers) that interest to you and explain how they would contribute to your academic goals and objectives. Use the links above for SPIRE and the Graduate Bulletin.
- Mention specific courses you have taken at your home university, and whether they provide any sort of academic foundation for the UMass courses in which you are interested.
- If you are interested in conducting research and/or specific lab work, explore departmental pages and faculty research areas that match your interests and include this in your statement.
- Feel free to mention internships or other work experiences that are related to your field of study.

After Writing Your Statement

- Let your friends, family members or academic advisors review your study proposal and help you make changes if necessary.

Things to Avoid

- Do not mention personal family matters or travel plans while you are abroad. New England is a beautiful place with interesting travel destinations, but it should not go into your study proposal!
- Do not indicate that you hope to improve your English since it is assumed that you have already achieved a high level of fluency.