MacEwan UNIVERSITY

INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR FAQ

COSTA RICA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Destination:
San José, Costa Rica

Faculty leader:
Albena Pergelova
pergelovaa@macewan.ca

Course credits:
3 credits

Availability expectations:

- Pre-departure program on campus: **March 20, April 3 and April 10.**
- Travel period: **April 23 to May 1, 2027 (9 days/8 nights).**
- A student may choose to extend their stay at the destination before or after the official dates of the tour at their own expense.

Key administrative dates:

- Enrollment deadline: **January 13, 2027.**
- Full payment (tuition fees and tour cost): **no later than January 13, 2027.**
- Given the nature of the study tours, which involve pre-payments to local service providers several months before departure, **all payments are non-refundable.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

1. **Why take part in a Business Study Tour?**

   Part of MacEwan's strategic vision *Teaching Greatness* is to ensure that our graduates are versatile, future-ready and culturally aware. Study tours provide you with unique opportunities to develop your global mindset and the ability to operate in unfamiliar and complex settings. While study tours differ in length, destination and cost, they all offer carefully crafted programs and affordable opportunities to experience first-hand what it means to do business internationally. Past destinations include Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Japan, Morocco, South Korea and the United Arab Emirates.

   These unique learning experiences also count as three-credit courses. Destinations are different every year and students can enrol multiple times, and even annually. While study tours are primarily designed for business students, they are open to non-business students who are interested in exploring the world.

2. **What makes Costa Rica a great destination for a Study Tour?**

   Costa Rica is known for its volcanos, biodiversity and breath-taking beaches. More than a quarter of the country's territory is composed of conservation and natural protected lands. It is a safe and peaceful country with a stable political environment. As a pioneer in sustainability, Costa Rica has been a model for sustainable practices for many industries within the region and around the world. The country produces most of its electricity from renewable resources. In the spirit of peace and sustainability, in December 1980, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly established The University for Peace (UPEACE) in Costa Rica, with the mission to "provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate co-operation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations."

   In partnership with UPEACE, study tour participants will explore equity, justice and peacemaking through the lens of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth. We will explore the challenges and opportunities in Costa Rica's business sector, as well as the interconnectedness between for-profit and ecologically sustainable business practices. Participants will hear from a diverse group of business leaders and social entrepreneurs who have leveraged their unique geographical, political and economic contexts in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation and social change.

3. **Who can participate?**

   - Must be in good academic standing (GPA of 2.0 or higher).
   - Must have completed 24 MacEwan University or post-secondary transfer credits. Students could participate after completing just two terms of study at MacEwan.
   - Students who have already taken a study tour course must have a 75% or higher in their professionalism/contribution component on previous study tours to be eligible for another tour.
   - Both business and non-business students can apply regardless of their areas of study. A limited number of seats is available to non-business students on a first-come, first-served basis. All students must contact the business academic advisors to enroll.

4. **I have taken a study tour course before, am I allowed to take it more than once?**

   A student can take the course more than once to travel to different destinations. Please confirm with a program advisor whether you are allowed to use it as a credit course toward your program of study.

5. **I am a non-business MacEwan student, can I join a tour that is organized by the School of Business?**

   All MacEwan students, including those enrolled in non-business programs, are welcome to enroll in business study tours while seats last. Please confirm with your program advisor that this course can be used as a credit course toward your program of study.

6. **What is the cost of the tour to Costa Rica?**

   - This is a 3-credit course, and tuition fees apply accordingly.
   - The cost of the tour to Costa Rica is $2,500.

7. **Do I need to purchase an insurance?**

   Yes, if you are not already covered under an insurance policy. Please note that your SAMU insurance may not be sufficient. You are encouraged to double-check with the insurer and make sure you have proper health and trip cancellation coverage.

8. **What is included in the price?**

   - Student accommodations (double or triple occupancy) in a hotel such as a Holiday Inn Express or equivalent.
   - All breakfasts, seven lunches and two dinners.
   - Field visits to Costa Rican organizations and cultural sites, as well as one university campus tour and lecture.
   - A field guide and ground transportation to all program activities included in the itinerary.
   - Transportation to and from the airport.

9. **What is not included?**

   - Tuition fees.
   - Airfare.
   - Airport transfer (Note: airport to hotels is easy and convenient).
   - Travel/health insurance.
   - Visas and vaccinations (when applicable).
   - Anything that is not included explicitly in the program.

10. **When should I buy my flight tickets?**

    Like any other course, a study tour may be cancelled (with full reimbursement) by the School of Business. For instance, this may be the case if the number of students enrolled by the closing date is insufficient to go ahead with the tour. **It is recommended that you do not buy your tickets before the final decision is made when the enrollment period ends.** You will receive a confirmation email from the faculty leader of your tour in due time.

11. **How do I enroll in this study tour course?**

    If you are ready to enroll, please contact an a business advisor (business@macewan.ca), and they will add you to the tour if you meet the requirements.

    Please note that the number of seats is limited, and enrollments will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Your seat is only confirmed when you pay the fees. Late applications will be placed on a waitlist in case new seats become available.

12. **What if I have a question that is not covered in this list?**

    For general questions about this course's program and conditions, please contact the tour's faculty leader, specified above.

13. **What does the Study Tour's schedule look like?**

    Below is a **tentative** schedule to give you a preliminary idea about what to expect. Please note this is **subject to changes** as we confirm details and availability with local partners and service providers.

DAY	ACTIVITY
Friday, April 23	Arrive at Juan Santamaría International Airport and settle into hotel in San José (Holiday Inn Express or equivalent) Hotel in San José: Holiday Inn Express or equivalent Hotel in Jacó: Mae de Luz or equivalent
Saturday, April 24	10 a.m.: Hotel pick up 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Welcome to UPEACE In this orientation session we work on the who, what, when, where and why of the trip, get to know each other as a group, understand the week's activities and get situated at UPEACE – and in Costa Rica. Walk up to the UPEACE monument. 12:30 p.m.: Lunch at UPEACE The UPEACE cafeteria offers a hearty plate full of fresh food suitable for all diets. 1:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.: SIFAIS – Social enterprise and inclusive economic opportunity Visit SIFAIS in La Carpio to explore how a non-profit organization combines community development with entrepreneurship, workforce training, and income-generating initiatives. We'll learn about programs such as culinary and textile training and examine SIFAIS's own operating model, including how partnerships, earned income, volunteers and outside support can help sustain social impact. Tour will immediately be followed by a welcome dinner.
Sunday, April 25	8 a.m.: Hotel pick up 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.: Costa Rica's green economy and ecotourism Through a visit to a National Park, students will explore Costa Rica's ecotourism sector and the role its natural resources play in the country's green economy. We will examine how Costa Rica has leveraged conservation and environmental policy to support tourism and economic development. 12 p.m.: Lunch at Freddo Fresa's restaurant 1:30 – 3 p.m.: LombriTek Situated on a family dairy farm, LombriTek is a quintessential social business. The younger generation, seeing manure run off into rivers and contaminate landscapes, built an enterprise to produce organic fertilizer that is now sold throughout the country! 4 – 5 p.m.: Return to the hotel. Students are responsible for their own dinner.
Monday, April 26	9 a.m.: Hotel pick up 9:30 – 11 a.m.: Social Innovators Q-and-A Panel Hear directly from a panel of social entrepreneurs including B Corps certified organizations about their work (possible guests include Aromas, Gluten Factory, Alma Travel Group, Diario Mirador rural news outlet and others). 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Session with the Costa Rican Coalition of Development Initiatives (CINDE) CINDE is responsible for attracting foreign business to Costa Rica. In this session, you'll learn what makes the country a wonderful place to invest and, through this, better understand the business ecosystem. 12:30 p.m.: Lunch at UPEACE Transfer to Jacó – arrival mid-afternoon for an exploration of the local hospitality industry and dinner on your own.

Tuesday, April 27	8 a.m.: Hotel pick up 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.: Session at Mareblu Mareblu is a non-profit organization operating along Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, focused on marine conservation and environmental restoration. Students will learn about the organization's sustainability strategy and role within Costa Rica's environmental sector. The session will provide insight into how non-profit and social-purpose organizations balance environmental objectives with operational, financial and community considerations. Lunch included, followed by afternoon small-group reflections and conversations. Dinner on your own in Jacó.
Wednesday, April 28	8:15 a.m.: Hotel pick up 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.: Visit to Tárcoles, a sustainable fishing village Visit a community-based fishing co-operative to explore how small-scale fishers have worked collectively to balance environmental sustainability with economic viability. Through conversation with local leaders, students will examine sustainable fishing practices, co-operative business models, and the opportunities and challenges of building livelihoods around responsible natural resource use. Lunch included at a local restaurant in Tárcoles. Return to San José. Dinner on your own.
Thursday, April 29	8:30 a.m.: Hotel pick up 9:30 a.m.: Field visit to El Toledo coffee farm El Toledo is a small coffee farm, led by a family that has been growing organic coffee for the last two decades. We will tour the coffee plantation and learn about sustainable coffee production and processing, and how they have adapted their practices to increase sustainability and profitability. Lunch at El Toledo – a fresh meal prepared on the farm; from there we'll go straight to UPEACE. 1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.: Classroom time at UPEACE with Dr. Pergelova.
Friday, April 30	8:30 a.m.: Hotel pick up 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Final student presentations Lunch at UPEACE 2:30 – 5 p.m.: Chepe Cletas walking tour of San José For our final group activity we'll visit a social enterprise dedicated to revitalizing the San José city centre by experiencing what they do – dynamic walking tours of the capital that allow you to learn about history and visit parts of the city rarely visited even by locals. Final group dinner at Café Rojo Vietnamese cuisine or similar.
Saturday, May 1	Departure day.