

ECUADOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & BIODIVERSITY STUDY ABROAD SPRING 2026



Embark on a transformative journey through Ecuador’s Amazon, cloud forests, and high Andes. This immersive program offers a unique opportunity to engage with the rich cultural traditions of the Quichua, Shuar, Achuar, and Waorani peoples. In collaboration with local communities and the Iyarina Field School, you’ll gain hands-on experience in sustainable development, cultural practices, and biodiversity conservation. Working alongside interdisciplinary faculty and resilient local partners, you’ll explore modern challenges through the lens of physical and social infrastructure, environmental stewardship, and cultural heritage. Using a historical perspective—from pre-Columbian times through colonial and modern eras—you’ll critically examine the impacts of development. This experience fosters cross-cultural understanding, adaptability, and ethical problem-solving, empowering students and communities to co-create meaningful, sustainable solutions.

DATES

20 May – 20 June 2026 (approximately)

HOUSING

Students will be accommodated at a variety of field stations throughout Ecuador. For the field components in the Amazon, the team will be staying in primitive cabin accommodations (with limited electricity and running water). The experience will begin and end in the historic district of the capital city of Quito.

COURSES

Students will enroll in 6 credits from the following courses while on this program:

UNIV 210R—Topics in Global and Cultural Awareness (Satisfies GE in Global and Cultural Awareness)

UNIV 216R—Topics in Biological Sciences (Satisfies GE for Biological Sciences)

Students may not take any other courses on this program, including BYU Online courses, without approval by the program director and ISP. Students may not engage in any remote employment activities during the program dates.

COST

\$3,800-4,300

Includes Latter-day Saint undergraduate full tuition (increased cost for graduate and non-Latter-day Saint students), housing, most meals, and international health insurance.

Does not include airfare, some meals, or personal expenses.

TRAVEL

Students are responsible for purchasing their own airfare to and from the program sites. Airfare reservations must be made through BYU Travel. Students should contact a BYU Travel agent.

BYU Travel | 280 HRCB | (801) 422-6293 | travel@byu.edu

PREPARATION

Accepted students are required to participate in an international cross-cultural preparation course (IAS 201R, 1 credit hour). This class will be held during the second block of the winter 2026 semester. Part-time BYU students and non-BYU students will need to pay an additional tuition fee.

International study programs are physically, emotionally, and mentally taxing and you must be in good health to participate. These programs often take place in international locations that do not have the same level of safety and services in terms of transportation, living conditions, residential accommodations, food, public behavior, and policing that you may be used to on campus. If you have further questions or concerns on this, please see <https://kennedy.byu.edu/isp-travel-policy>

Students must meet all country- and program-specific COVID and health requirements for travel.

FUNDING SOURCES

Regular BYU tuition scholarships, Pell Grants, and Federal Insured Student Loans may be applied to study abroad programs. Students who submit the financial aid section of the ISP application and who have a current FAFSA form on file at the Financial Aid Office (A-41 ASB) will be considered for a Study Abroad scholarship. Academic departments and colleges may assist with scholarships and grants. Private grants and scholarships outside of BYU may also assist (see kennedy.byu.edu/scholarships).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Students must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Complete the online application at kennedy.byu.edu/isp-apply. A nonrefundable \$35 application fee is required; applicants will be interviewed once the application is complete. Students will be notified via e-mail of their acceptance into the program.

Application Deadline: 25 February 2026

FACULTY

Seth Bybee is a faculty director of the program. He is a professor in the Department of Biology at Brigham Young University and has been conducting research in remote parts of the globe for over 15 years, including South America: 4057 LSB | (801) 865-5233 | seth_bybee@byu.edu

Andrew South is a faculty director of the program. He is a professor in the Department of Civil and Construction Engineering at Brigham Young University and has been doing community development work for over 15 years: 430 H-EB | (801) 422-6489 | andrew_south@byu.edu

George Handley's research focuses on the literature of Latin America and the US and on the environmental humanities. He directs the Global Environmental Studies at BYU: 3027 JFSB | (801) 574-6672 | george_handley@byu.edu

INTERESTED STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT

International Study Programs | 101 HRCB | (801) 422-3686 | isp@byu.edu | kennedy.byu.edu/isp

PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS

International Study Programs (ISP) reserves the right to cancel this program, revise its offerings, or make any adjustments to the preliminary cost. If it becomes necessary for ISP to cancel a program, all program payments made to BYU ISP will be refunded to the student's BYU financial account. ISP is the only office authorized to cancel any of its programs.