

Accra, Ghana & Paris, France



Mackenzie Ridley

Program: Global Public Health in Ghana & Paris - Summer 2019

Major: Health, Society and Policy

Earning the Community Engagement Badge:



My learning abroad experience has forever changed my view of the world. I loved the opportunity to research but the community engagement was the best part by far. I made so many friends and connections to the community I worked with in Kumasi. I was so lucky to be a guest and learn about their community. I hope to study abroad again, but I will only do it if community engagement is involved, because this program was amazing.



Earning the Research Experience Badge:



Earning the Research Experience Badge was so exciting and interesting. Before this, I had only written research papers that didn't allow for me to conduct any research of my own. My group was doing qualitative research, which was more difficult but well worth it in the end. Qualitative research requires a lot of work to create the questions, transcribe recordings, and code the data. I learned that while it is demanding and there are lots of layers and steps, it's so gratifying. I sincerely hope I have another opportunity to conduct similar research.

Transferable Skills:



Two of the greatest skills I learned while studying abroad was cultural sensitivity and qualitative research skills. I'm using both of these sets of skills now as I am working towards my Honors Thesis. I think cultural sensitivity when travelling abroad is vital to a fun and respectful experience. From my study abroad, I learned that this skill can be applied to anything I do, and anywhere I go. I've found this skill useful in my work as I advise undergrad students, when I'm volunteering with Salt Lake City's Parks & Rec participants, as well as within my own diverse family. As for my research skills, I'm still working on the research now. My group is continuing to write and code our data with the hopes of getting published. The opportunity to work with graduate students to put our research paper together has been amazing and I hope to do other research projects like it in the future.

"My Learning Abroad experience taught me way more than I expected. My program pushed me out of my comfort zone and taught me invaluable skills while making unforgettable memories. I'm so thankful for the once in a lifetime experience, as well as the friends I made from Utah and Ghana!"